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HISTORY

OF

CIVILISATION.

BY

WILLIAM ALEX^R MACKINNON, F.R.S. M.P.

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"Liberty hath a sharp and double edge, fit only to be handled by just and virtuous men; neither is it completely obtained, but by them who have the happy skill to know what laws are wanting, and how to frame them substantially, that good men may have the freedom which they merit, and the bad the curb which they need."—MILTON: *History of England*, Book III.

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PREFACE.

THE favourable manner in which two editions of the work on Public Opinion were received by the public, induced me to direct my attention to a more extensive view of the progress of Civilisation, and of the sentiment already mentioned. After a consideration of the subject for some years, I could arrive at no other conclusions than those laid down in the following pages. To establish my theory, it was necessary to refer to former times, and to compare them with the present. For this purpose an investigation into the customs and social relations of past ages was necessary.

Historic narratives, it has been observed, may be divided into three kinds or stages.*

First, that of the annalist or chronicler, who deals merely in facts and events arranged in order of time, having no principle of selection and no plan of arrangement.

* See Coleridge.

Next, that of the writer who takes his stand on some moral point, and selects a series of events for the purpose of illustrating, if not proving, his position; such as Thucydides, who recounts the evils of democratic or aristocratic partisanship, or Polybius, when he describes the tactics and military discipline of the Romans.

The last stage, the highest and most grand, founded on philosophy, is not composed for any particular cause, but attempts to describe human nature itself on a great scale; to hold a mirror up to mankind, such as the Herodotean history.

In my humble attempt to trace out the progress of civilisation from the earliest time to the present day, I have endeavoured to follow the *second* of these kinds of historic narrations, and to delineate, from the most authentic sources, and the best records of foregone days, the gradual progress of civilisation, and its results on the social relations of mankind.

In examining the state of information in Egypt, Greece, and Rome, I fear that I may militate against some generally received opinions. If I have done so, all I can plead in

justification is, that, from ancient writers of history no other conclusions could be arrived at, than those which I have made, even after consulting the volumes of several modern authorities, and conversing with two intelligent travellers who have lately written, one on Egypt*, and the other on Greece, with much ability.†

After considering those nations of the ancients, whence information is supposed to have spread over the Western world, I take a survey of the prominent events of our history from the Conquest (inclusive) to the present time. I then proceed briefly to examine the situation and state of civilisation of other countries in Europe, and the several quarters of the globe. In this research I have deemed it advisable to allude, at the close of the second volume, to the frequency of wars that have desolated the human race; to the condition of women in barbarous or semi-barbarous times; and also to the prevalence, even till the eighteenth century, of a fearful sacrifice of human life, on the charge of sorcery and witchcraft.

* Sir Gardner Wilkinson.

† Mr. St. John.

When a hope is expressed that warfare between nations may not in these days be so prevalent as formerly, it is not intended to convey the impression that such events will not occur, but only that they may be of more rare occurrence than in bygone days.

In the Introduction to this work, I have deemed it advisable to give a definition of the elements necessary to form civilisation, without which my meaning could not be clearly understood.

I have endeavoured not only to avoid, but to divest myself, as far as the weakness of our nature will admit, of all party bias or political feeling in the following pages. It has also been my anxious desire to manifest that respect which I sincerely entertain for all sects and denominations of Christians.

After making these necessary statements, I will only beg for that indulgence which is required in a work on a subject which may be termed novel, and which as yet, to the best of my belief, has scarcely been noticed by any writer in our nation.

January 1st, 1846.

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HISTORY OF CIVILISATION,

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INTRODUCTION.

Civilisation and Public Opinion depend on each other. — Definition of the several Classes of Society. — Upper, Middle, and Lower Class. — Popular Clamour. — Public Opinion. — Middle Class the most important in a Civilised State. — Increased by the Use of Machinery. — Machinery increases Civilisation. — Enumeration of the several Stages of Society as they advance towards Civilisation. — Savage Tribes. — Pastoral Tribes. — Agricultural Population. — Feudal System. — Arbitrary Power. — Increase of Happiness in the People caused by Civilisation. — Ancient States have decayed from a deficiency in Moral Principle.

CIVILISATION and public opinion do not co-exist exactly in an equal proportion. The latter, nevertheless, depends so much on the former, that the history of one includes, in some degree, that of the other. Civilisation, uninfluenced by public opinion, has been recognised, to a certain extent, at various eras in different parts of the world. It is said to have been found in the Grecian Republics, in the Augustan Age at Rome, and during the reign of Louis XIV. in France. But at

neither of these periods do we discover that diffused and all-reaching civilisation which can alone exalt the destiny of nations, give comfort to nearly every class, and make each man feel that, in his degree, he has a stake in the country to which he belongs.

To be clearly understood in the following pages, let us define the meaning we attach to the words "Civilisation" and "Public Opinion." From an attentive perusal of British history and the annals of other parts of the world, we find that civilisation is formed and gains strength according to the information, moral principle (based on religious faith), facility of communication, and amount of wealth possessed by individuals composing a given community. These elements we shall style the *requisites for civilisation*, and we shall attempt to show that the form of any government, and its measures, becomes adapted to the interests and wants of a people as public opinion grows and is disseminated, and the efficacy of this national sentiment depends, in great measure, on the relative proportion of those persons not forced to labour with the number who are compelled to gain their daily bread by daily

work; and no other means appear of defining the component parts of any society, than by estimating the property, real or personal, possessed by individuals. The most correct manner, therefore, of determining the income of persons who can be placed in the several classes of society, will be (as the value of precious metals is liable to fluctuation) to ascertain the number of dependents qualified for labour that the means of an individual will allow him to support. A separation of the community into three classes of society, the upper, the middle, and the lower, is that which is most generally recognised.

In the upper class may be included all those who can command the work or time of one hundred labourers or more. Admitting the average wages of a day-labourer, throughout the year, to be about £30, this would place in the upper class all those who have a permanent income of £3000 a year or upwards, *an income which may be transmitted to their descendants.*

In the middle class we include such individuals as can command the labour of from five to one hundred men.

The lower class may consist of all those

persons not comprehended in the other classes — who could command only their own labour, or the work of not more than five others.

The upper class, therefore, will consist of those who have an independent income of £3000 a year and more.

The middle class, of those who have from £150 to £3000.

The lower class of those who have their own labour, or from £30 to £150 a year.

The most important of these three classes for the influence of public opinion is the middle; the upper not being sufficiently numerous, and the lower not sufficiently informed, nor possessed of the leisure necessary to give strength to that sentiment.

Before we proceed, it will be necessary to distinguish between popular clamour and public opinion, words often confounded with, and mistaken for, each other, yet essentially different, and emanating from totally opposite causes. Public opinion is powerful in a community where the requisites for its formation are spread among the people; that is, where moral principle, information, wealth, and facility of communication exist, and where the

middle class is extensive. On the contrary, popular clamour is influential in proportion as the lower class is numerous, ignorant, poor, and fanatical. Popular clamour is an excitement created by, and exercising influence on, the passions of the multitude, who usually form rash resolves, and act without reflection, judgment, or regard for consequences. In proportion as reason exercises its influence on a people, sudden bursts of feeling will be less common, but public opinion will be more powerful. Popular clamour has probably less influence in this country than in any other, owing to the strength of public opinion. If the former occasionally appears, it arises from freedom of speech and action possessed by the people, and the mildness of our authorities; not from any strength in itself. In some nations of the Continent popular clamour may be held under restraint; but should the pressure be taken off its effect would be more influential than in this island, because here it is thoroughly subdued by public opinion. Wherever civilisation and a middle class are spread over a community, public opinion will be all-powerful, and popular clamour impotent. It may happen that on some particular ques-

tion these may be united; but generally the influence of the one is in an inverse ratio to that of the other.

Many years have passed since the following observation on popular clamour was made by an eminent judge*:—

"I defy any one to point out a single instance in my life in which the popular clamour of the times had the least influence on my determination. I thank God I have a more permanent and steady rule for my conduct — the dictates of my own breast. Those who have foregone that pleasing adviser, and given up their minds to be the slave of every popular impulse, I sincerely pity. I pity them still more if their vanity leads them to mistake the shouts of a mob for the trumpet of fame. Experience might inform them that many who had been saluted with the huzzas of a crowd one day, have received their execrations the next; and many who, by the popularity of their lives, have been held up as spotless patriots, have nevertheless appeared on the historian's page, when truth has triumphed over delusion, the assassins of liberty."

* Chief Justice Mansfield's speech, 1770.

A very able writer, discussing this subject, says, "When the balance of power is duly fixed in a state, nothing is more dangerous and unwise than to give way to the first steps of popular encroachment, which is usually done in hope of procuring ease and quiet from some vexatious clamour. This is breaking into a constitution to serve a present exigency,—the remedy of an empiric to stifle the present pain, but with certain prospect of sudden and terrible returns. When a child grows easy and content by being humoured, and when a lover becomes satisfied by small compliances, without further pursuit, then expect to find popular passions content with small concessions. If one single example could be brought, from the whole compass of history, of any one popular passion that ever knew or proposed or declared what share of power was its due, then might there be some hope that it were a matter to be adjusted by conferences or debates; but since all that is manifestly otherwise, I see no other course to be taken in a settled state than a steady, constant resolution in those to whom the rest of the balance is entrusted, never to give way so far to popular clamour as to make the least breach in

the constitution, through which a million of abuses will certainly in time force their way."*

The difference between public opinion and popular clamour was exemplified in 1844 by the sentiments for peace or war that influenced the two nations, England and France. Public opinion in both countries was strongly and decidedly in favour of peace, and of a cordial and lasting understanding between the two people. Popular clamour was equally decided for the alternative.

Public opinion is the idea entertained on any subject by the best informed, most intelligent, and moral persons; which idea is gradually understood and spread among the people, and adopted as their sentiment. Whenever a community is sufficiently civilised to be governed by public opinion, then indeed has it raised itself in the scale of moral existence.

There is nothing in the whole fabric of civil institutions so interesting and imposing as an exposition of the everlasting principles of moral legislation. The administration of justice in this country, where the judge, without

* Swift's Works, 8vo edit. vol. iii. p. 51.

a guard, and without pomp, decides on the dearest interests of the citizen, trusting chiefly to the moral sentiment of the community for the execution of his decrees, is the most beautiful and encouraging aspect under which civil polity can be viewed. Nothing is so venerable as the voice of truth and justice, under the power of public opinion, reaching and subduing the high as well as the low, placing a rampart equally around the splendid mansions of wealth, and the lowly huts of poverty; repressing wrong, vindicating innocence, humbling the oppressor, and publishing to the world the right of every human being to the privileges of human nature. Where public opinion is prevalent, it throws power into the hands of intelligent individuals, and spreads itself throughout all orders of the community. It opens new channels, by which the gifted mind, in whatever rank or condition, may communicate itself far and wide. Through the diffusion of education and printing, an individual may now speak to multitudes incomparably more numerous than ancient or modern eloquence ever electrified in the popular assembly or the hall of legislation. By these instruments, truth is asserting her sove-

reignty over nations, without the help of rank, office, or sword; and her faithful ministers will become more and more the lawgivers of the world.*

The opinion, says Bacon, of all men of information divested of prejudice, on a given subject, is nearly the same †: but let us imagine a sound, moral, and judicious opinion on any subject, uttered to a people destitute of information and moral principle. Such a sentiment might possibly be adopted through caprice, but not from conviction; and it would therefore have no hold on the public mind. Take Turkey, for example, where we may assume the population to be as ignorant and fanatical as in any part of Europe. Let us suppose that some intelligent and moral persons were desirous to spread doctrines which in England, or in any truly civilised state, would become public opinion. In Turkey such doctrines would be a nullity, because the ignorance or prejudice of the people would not permit their dissemination. The converse, also, as a matter of course, seems to follow, that as civilisation advances towards maturity, public opinion becomes dominant.

* Chalmers. † Bacon's Essays.

In our island there is, no doubt, even now, great room for improvement in the education of the lower classes; yet probably the requisites for civilisation are more generally spread through the land, from the extension of the middle class, than in any other community; and public opinion, therefore, has more power. Moral instruction, information through the press, and facility of intercourse, are more extensive here than elsewhere. This facility of intercourse, so wonderfully increased of late, is a very important agent in civilisation; by which the dwellers in one part of a land may have easy and rapid communication with other portions of the same country. Through this agency also, separate nations may interchange commodities, or hold communion with each other, by railroads, canals, steam-boats, or any other inventions that may yet arise from the ingenuity of man. Marvellous, indeed, are the achievements of modern mechanism! Not only does machinery enrich the whole human family, by supplying, as with the stroke of a magician's wand, the wants or luxuries of one population by the produce or superabundance of another, but it spreads information, and destroys prejudice. It is that mighty power which levels invidious

differences between nations, and causes men of separate climes to regard each other as brothers, and to co-operate for mutual good. Wherever it penetrates, it is found, moreover, to be a potent auxiliary in shaping and nursing public opinion.

This beneficial agency may possibly be followed by some concomitant disadvantages; but the aggregate good received by the people will more than counterbalance any evil that may accrue. It might be imagined that in estimating the civilisation of Europe and of the world, now in such rapid progress, more importance is here attached to facility of communication than, at first sight, would seem warranted. Let us, however, suppose the existence of a population destitute of the means of intercourse, except in some immediate vicinity, or of imparting or receiving information by any other method. How, in such a case, could public opinion be entertained? How could the discoveries or sentiments of men be conveyed to their fellow creatures? Intellect, however vigorous, would waste itself in useless luxuriance, and be a burden to its possessor. By facility of intercourse, it now bears glorious fruit for the sustenance and improvement of society.

Whatever tends to alter the proportion of the several classes in reference to each other, is of moment to the civilisation of the entire community. The power and general use of machinery adds to the middle class, by augmenting the wealth of the people in a much greater ratio than was formerly thought possible; and considering that this power may, by its capability of expansion, be greatly increased, its effect on commerce, manufactures, and trade, sets all reasoning by analogy completely at defiance. Machinery supplies the use of labour without the expense of clothes and food. Accordingly, in whatever country this artificial and wonderful agent prevails, a proportionate amount of capital will be created; and as disposable capital, by its fructifying quality, multiplies itself, it is impossible to assign any limits to the wealth which steam power may produce, or its effect in increasing the middle class.

In saying that by manufactures and commerce, and especially by the use of recently-invented machinery, the middle class is more augmented than either of the others, we do not intend to assert that the upper may not, by the same means, receive some addition to

its numbers; but such increase is trifling when compared with that of the middle. Persons well acquainted with the manufacturing world, are aware that very large fortunes are seldom made by one individual. The capital so created, generally diffuses itself through several channels. It gives comfort and competence to many; but large fortunes only to a few.

To exemplify the almost uniform tendency towards increase in the middle class, let us, by way of simile, imagine three lakes near each other in a line, the two extremes communicating with the middle by any channel. Let these respectively represent the upper, middle, and lower classes of society. The use of machinery creates capital, which, being subdivided among the children or next of kin of the party by whom it is realised, lifts so many out of the lower rank into the middle; that is, forces so much of the water from the lower lake into the next above it. The parties by whom capital is possessed, become purchasers of land, and thus encourage the tendency in the upper class, both by facility of sale, and temptation arising from increase of luxuries created by machinery, to

dispose of part, if not the whole, of their landed estates. In proportion as this is effected, they merge into the middle class. Accordingly, there is a constant flow from the upper and lower lake into the middle, to the increase of the latter at the expense of the two former.

In tracing the progress of civilisation, it is scarcely possible to attach too much importance to the middle class, and to its influence over public opinion. Wherever the impulse inherent in man to improve his condition has free scope, as it will have in a country blessed with liberal institutions and equality of laws, a middle class must necessarily become the most powerful in the community.

This may be considered as nearly the most perfect state of civilisation. Let us now proceed to glance at the several conditions of society in the gradual approach to this consummation.

The most debased condition in which human nature can be placed, is where man, little elevated above the brute, depends for his subsistence on the scanty means derived from the chase, from fishing, or from the produce of the earth without cultivation, which, except between the tropics, must have

been precarious: not being possessed of effective mechanical instruments, his chance of success against the beasts of the field, or produce of the sea, was always doubtful. Some of the lowest tribes of North American Indians, of the Esquimaux, the natives of New Holland, and other savages, exemplify this condition of society, and exhibit a state of the greatest possible destitution.

The first stage of improvement in the scale of civilisation, may be seen in the pastoral tribes, who, though possessed of property in cattle and flocks, had no positive ownership in the soil. These formed wandering hordes, migrating from one place to another in search of pasture or of water, and totally unacquainted with tillage. Tribes of this kind are often mentioned in Holy Writ, and are even now to be traced in parts of Asia and of Africa. Such a pastoral community must occasionally have endured privations; but, possessed of herds and flocks, and generally living in a mild climate, they had some resources. They suffered much less, had greater means of obtaining food, enjoyed more leisure, and were in a higher situation than the savages before mentioned.

Still, this state of existence is only one step from misery. "In pastoral countries the condition of the lowest rank of people is sufficiently wretched. Among manufacturers, men that have no property may have art and industry, which make them necessary, and therefore valuable. But, where flocks and corn are the only wealth, there are always more hands than work; and of that work there is little in which skill and dexterity can be much distinguished. He therefore who is born poor never can be rich. The son merely occupies the place of the father, and life knows nothing of progression or advancement."*

The next gradation in improvement is that wherein agriculture is not unknown: where the earth is, to a certain extent, cultivated so as to reward man with crops for which he has laboured, and by which he is supported. In this state, laws must be formed, and property is gained in the soil. Such seems to have been the condition of part of Europe previously to the feudal system. The custom of cultivating the earth is of high antiquity, and was theoretically and practically understood

* Dr. Johnson's Hebrides.

by the ancients, as we find (see the Book of Genesis) in the primeval state of man, and subsequently in Hesiod's "Works and Days," the elder Cato's books, the Georgics of Virgil, the writings of Varro, Columella, and others. Describing the origin of agriculture, Virgil says: —

> "The sire of gods and men, with hard decrees,
> Forbids our plenty to be bought with ease;
> And wills that mortal men, inur'd to toil,
> Should exercise with pains the grudging soil.
> Himself invented first the shining share,
> And whetted human industry by care:
> Himself did handicrafts and arts ordain,
> Nor suffered sloth to rust his active reign.
> Ere this, no peasant vex'd the peaceful ground,
> Which only turfs and greens for altars found:
> No fences parted fields, nor marks nor bounds
> Distinguish'd acres of litigious grounds;
> But all was common, and the fruitful earth
> Was free to give her unexpected birth."
>
> GEORGICS, BOOK I. DRYDEN'S TRANS.

But this, though an improvement on the former, was nevertheless a very unsatisfactory state. Commerce and manufacturing industry were scarcely known, and there was little or no facility of communication. Even had the cultivation of land been as well understood as at present, no demand for produce existed beyond the amount requisite to sup-

ply the wants of the party in whom the cultivation originated, or the necessities of his neighbours or dependents, or else to make good a former deficiency, or to anticipate a future dearth.

Under such a state of things, how could capital be created? At the end of any given time, say one or five centuries, the relative proportion to each other of the several classes of the community would be nearly the same. Few inducements could arise to render the sale of land necessary; and still fewer were the means by which it could be acquired by others. Dr. Johnson observes: —

"Where there is no commerce nor manufactures, he that is born poor can scarcely become rich; and if none are able to buy estates, he that is born to land cannot annihilate his family by selling it. This was once the state of this country. Perhaps there is no example till within a few centuries of any family whose estate was alienated otherwise than by violence or foreign aggression. Since money has become of use, many landed proprietors, like others, found the art of spending more than they receive." *

* Johnson's Hebrides.

In this state of society was the population of our island during the Heptarchy.

The formation of the feudal system, or the establishment of "feudes," * was another step in the advance of civilisation, by rendering the tenure or fixed property in the soil more secure. By this plan, sudden inroads or permanent conquests by one people over another were rendered less frequent. In itself, however, the feudal system was a most intolerable and grievous oppression. A few chiefs, or great proprietors, exercised arrogant and unlimited power over a humble and wretched population of serfs and bondmen. When the Celtic tribes poured out from their northern hives in vast numbers over the regions of Europe at the declension of the Roman Empire, the feudal scheme was organised in their newly-acquired territories, as the safest means of securing what they had won; and accordingly large districts of land

* This word, of Saxon origin, "is defined by civilians to be a grant of lands, honours, or fees, either to a man during the will of his lord or sovereign, or for the feudatory's own life, or to him and his heirs for ever, upon condition that he and his heirs do acknowledge the donor and his heirs to be their lord and sovereign, and shall bear faith and allegiance to him and his for the said tenure, and do such service for the same as is covenanted between them, or as is proper to the feude." — BAILEY.

were allotted by the conquering leader or king to the superior officers of his army, and by them dealt out again in smaller portions to subalterns or deserving soldiers, as a conditional reward or stipend for service, either at home or in the wars, for him by whom they were given. If these conditions were neglected, the land reverted to the grantor. Under this system the vanquished population became serfs or villains, and cultivated the soil.

The establishment of feudal tenure by the Northern conquerors proved so efficacious that it was generally adopted by the rulers of those countries which had been provinces of Rome, but had fallen under other masters in the general wreck of the Roman Empire. Thus, in a few years, the doctrine of military fealty, or the feudal system of tenure, extended itself over the whole of the western world.

The next state of civilisation is that of absolute monarchy. By the assistance of the Church, the sovereigns of most nations of Europe were enabled to crush the baronial power, and to consolidate their people under one uniform code of laws, and one entire system of government. By this change, a

very considerable amelioration took place in the several communities of Europe. The laws were administered, although, perhaps, not impartially, and facility of communication, which had been checked by the squabbles of the feudal barons, was promoted. This improvement occurred in different parts of Europe at various periods. The absolute dominion of the sovereign was an assistance to the march of improvement, and was the only sort of government qualified to repress turbulence, or prevent anarchy, that could be devised in those rude, warlike, and unlettered times.

The fifth and last state of civilisation is that in which security of person and property is firmly established, by a just and complete administration of good laws, where public opinion has the greatest influence, and where more happiness is found in the community.

We repeat, that the greater the amount of the middle class in proportion to the other classes, the greater is the extent of a nation's happiness. It is in this class that individual exertion is chiefly found; and individual exertion adds wealth to the community. A certain portion only of human labour can be

productive of subsistence; the other part is instrumental to enjoyment: both are equally necessary, the one exciting the other. Let us call the former the organ for producing food, the latter that for producing clothing or luxuries. It signifies nothing as to the main purpose of trade, how superfluous the latter production may be, or whether the want of it be real or imaginary. For example, a watch may not be very necessary to a peasant; yet, if the peasant will work one hour a day additional for a year, to get a watch, the true design of trade is answered; and the watch-maker, while he polishes the case, or files the wheels, is contributing to the production of corn as effectually, though not so directly, as if he was ploughing the land. Thus it follows, that manufactures increase the produce of the earth; as, whatever is required of luxuries by those who produce food, must be obtained by an additional amount of exertion on their part. By these means, in this last stage of civilisation, that state in which Great Britain is at present, a vast amount of wealth, created as already mentioned, augments hourly the middle class, and the happiness of the community is in-

creased, while civilisation and public opinion are fostered.

It must, however, be admitted, that some consequences attend this state that may partially counteract the benefits mentioned. When, by introducing more superfluities into general use, luxury has rendered the usual accommodations of life more expensive and artificial, the difficulty of maintaining a family comfortably, in accordance with the established mode of living, becomes greater. Marriages therefore are less frequent, as men of the first education, and of the most refined habits, will not marry to sink their place or condition in society, or to forego those indulgences to which they are accustomed, or which, observing among their equals, they consider necessary.* To this consideration may be added the change or loss of property by speculations, and the situation of persons of high intellect and finished education, whose means do not correspond with their acquirements.

Although these drawbacks, arising from the luxury so prevalent in this state of civilisation, may be occasionally felt severely, and are to be regretted, yet on the whole it must be

* See Paley, Moral Phil. vol. i.

admitted, that the national happiness and enjoyment are much increased in the present civilised state. As before observed, the proportion of those who enjoy the luxuries and conveniences of life is much greater; even among the lower class much less deficiency of food, clothing, and shelter is found than formerly, incomparably less than in the other and inferior stages of civilisation before enumerated. The famines, the plagues, and even the epidemics which in former days ravaged all parts of the world, have disappeared (the two former particularly) from nations in this advanced state. Every man is now a free agent, and can act as he pleases if he harm not his neighbour; the human mind is expanded by the spread of education, and the desire to improve their condition stimulates the activity and ingenuity of all classes. No people in ancient days ever approximated to such a state of society; a state to which all European nations are fast progressing, and to which other parts of the world, where information and facility of communication can be obtained, will advance.

We have observed that both the foundation and key-stone of civilisation is moral prin-

ciple, founded on religion, which ought to pervade the community.

"A commonwealth ought to be but as one huge Christian personage, one mighty growth and stature of an honest man, as big and compact in virtue as in body; for look what the grounds and causes are of single happiness to one man, the same ye shall find them to a whole state, as Aristotle, both in his Ethics and Politics, from the principles of reason, lays down: by consequence, therefore, that which is good and agreeable to monarchy will appear soonest to be so, by being good and agreeable to the true welfare of every Christian; and that which can be justly proved hurtful and offensive to every true Christian, will be evinced to be alike hurtful to monarchy: for God forbid that we should separate and distinguish the end and good of a monarch from the end and good of the monarchy, or of that from Christianity."*

A profound observer of human nature says, "I take goodness in this sense, the seeking the weal (welfare) of men; which is that the Greeks call Philanthropia. This of all virtues and dignities of the mind is the greatest, being

* Milton, Reformation in England.

the character of the Deity; and without it man is a busy, mischievous, wretched thing, no better than a kind of vermin."*

In his latter position Bacon was correct; by virtue he meant that moral principle that has already been stated as one of the most powerful elements of all civilisation,—a principle that cannot exist without true religious belief, the deficiency of which has checked the improvement in civilisation of all the nations which history has placed on record. Without this, physical advantages, however great, are but weak auxiliaries, for wherever moral principle is wanting, only a spurious kind of civilisation is found—only that described to have existed in ancient days, as will appear in the following pages. In this spurious civilisation, without moral principle or religious belief, what is public opinion? It becomes the voice of national selfishness, sanctioning, if not applauding, the perpetration of acts in violation of the duty of man to his fellow men. To this deficiency of virtue in nations may be mainly attributed the fall of mighty states, and the tardy progress of civilisation throughout the world.

* Bacon's Essays.

In speaking of the calamities consequent on a want of religion, it is remarked, "Discord must inevitably prevail among men who have lost all sense of divine superintendence, and who have no higher motive of action or forbearance than present opinion or present interest. Surely there will come a time when every passion shall be put upon the guard by the dread of general depravity; when he who laughs at wickedness in his companion, *shall start from it in his child:* when the man who fears not for his soul, shall tremble for his possessions: when it will be discovered that religion only can secure the rich from robbery, and the poor from oppression,—can defend the state from treachery, and the throne from assassination."*

It may be said, that admitting this principle to be true, how does it happen that since our admirable religion has appeared, eighteen centuries have passed, during which civilisation has made but slow progress. There is no doubt that Europe would have advanced much more rapidly had moral principle founded on religion been prevalent in the population of this portion of the

* Dr. Johnson.

globe. Perhaps the best answer we can give is to quote the words of one of the great ornaments of the last century, Dr. Paley, who thus accounts for the corruption of the early and middle ages, and the degraded state from which the European population might have emerged centuries ago, if moral principle had been more fully extended — if, as he observes*, "the simplicity of Christianity had never been lost sight of, and had earlier been recovered from beneath that load of unauthorised traditions which the ignorance of some ages, and the learning of others, the superstition of weak, and the craft of designing men, have (unhappily for its interest) heaped upon it" in former centuries.

If in the following pages it should be demonstrated that, in all countries, as civilisation and public opinion advance, liberty and the welfare of the people are increased; and if it also can be shown that, as a nation is unacquainted with the requisites for civilisation, no matter what institutions may be formed, its government must be insecure, if not arbitrary, — it will not be hazarding too much, or forming too hasty a conclusion, to

* Vol. i. p. 5. Introd. Moral Philos.

lay down as a general rule, *that in a civilised community the form of government and its liberal tendency depend on the state of society, not the state of society on the form of government.*

STATE OF CIVILISATION AMONG THE ANCIENTS.

CHAPTER I.

CIVILISATION IN ANCIENT EGYPT.

Obscurity of Egyptian Records. — Inaccuracy of Herodotus and Diodorus. — Early Arts and Sciences. — Population divided into Castes. — Priestly Surveyors of Land. — Privilege of the Priesthood, as demonstrated in Genesis. — Stupendous Designs of Egyptian Monarchs, executed by a slavish Population. — The Pyramids. — Ignorance and Idolatry of the Egyptians. — Prophetic Denunciation against Egypt. — Its Fall. — Colossal Statue of Ozymandias. — Civilisation not known in ancient Egypt.

Of the degree of civilisation which existed in ancient Egypt, we are almost ignorant. Buried in the gulph of former ages, its language has become a mystery, and its few traditions are enigmas, sounding like the indistinct whisperings of a dream.

We know, however, that in the early days of the world, much of the knowledge possessed by nations was derived from Egypt. Its pyramids, ruined temples, tombs, colossal statues, and other relics, attest the ancient magnificence of the country; but not the slightest doubt can exist that its population, power, and civilisation have been much exaggerated. The account given by Diodorus Siculus was derived from the legends of Egyptian priests. Herodotus, copied by Pomponius Mela, talks of

twenty thousand towns in the time of Amasis. A living writer* says, "The incorrect ideas concerning ancient Egypt and the Egyptians, which seem commonly to prevail, even among the learned, may partly be owing to our too great veneration for ancient authors, who would appear however to have fallen into many errors, misled by the priests, or, where their notes were deficient, by a lapse of memory to which we all are liable; for Diodorus insists that Herodotus relates many fables; and whoever shall be at the pains to examine the work of the Sicilian antiquarian, will find that he also has sinned in the same spirit." The accounts we have received of ancient Egypt from Herodotus and Diodorus Siculus, and other Greek and Roman writers, of the state of Egypt many centuries before their days, must be received with great caution. Their information was only by tradition, and tradition is often fond of exaggeration. That some arts had been cultivated in Egypt cannot be doubted; that a slight knowledge of astronomy was handed down by the inscriptions on their monuments seems also certain; but that civilisation pervaded Egypt is not proved by any evidence whatever.

We are apt to entertain an exalted opinion of the state of society where great monuments have been raised by the work of man, and to infer that civilisation must then have existed. Does

* See Mr. St. John's learned work on Egypt, 1834.

not the erection of stupendous but useless monuments prove the state of degradation, if not of slavery, to which a people must be reduced, if forced, without any individual benefit, to labour at the caprice of their task-masters?

Herodotus, who is correct when he states what came under his personal observation, but who is fond of quoting fables and romances, tells us, "Cheops condemned the entire population of Egypt, without exception, to labour at public works; some to quarry stones in the chain of Arabian mountains, and to drag them to the Nile; others to transport them across the river, and convey them onwards. One hundred thousand men, relieved every month, were always so occupied, and this labour lasted ten years, during which the entire nation was overcome with fatigue by such labour, which, it appears, in making the road only, was equal to that employed in constructing one pyramid."*

One of the *Savans* who accompanied Napoleon in his expedition†, observes, that the number of towns enumerated by Herodotus are so much exaggerated, that it is impossible to believe the account. Admitting those towns to have held only three thousand or four thousand inhabitants in each, the population of ancient Egypt would have been eighty millions! a complete absurdity. In such a case there would

* Herodotus, lib. ii. chap. 124.

† Jomard. See his "Population, ancienne et moderne, de l'Egypte," p. 115.

be ten inhabited places in a square league. After very careful investigation, this writer estimates the modern population of Egypt under three millions, and about double that number in the most flourishing days of the country.

According to Plato, writing by characters or hieroglyphics, astronomy, and geometry came from Egypt. "Arts and sciences, such as they were in former days, had their cradle in this country, and gradually spread themselves over Greece, and afterwards to Rome. Architecture, the use of metals, weaving, embroidery, tanning skins, fabricating stuffs, and polishing stones, were known in Egypt, and had spread into Asia, long before Cecrops appeared in Attica." *

That glass was known and fabricated in Egypt, is evident, by many specimens of it having been dug out of the tombs at Thebes, ruined five hundred years before the Christian era. Later allusions to Egyptian glass occur in the account of the feast given by Scaurus, Sylla's father-in-law, to the Roman people, in which he adorned his theatre with all he could obtain that was most precious, —gold, marble, and glass, brought from Egypt. †

"Let us speak of the pyramids of Egypt," says

* Fourier, "Recherches sur l'Egypte." Folio edit. Vol. i. p. 824.

† "Theatrum hoc fuit, cui scena triplex altitudine 360 columnarum; ima pars scenæ e marmore fuit, media e vitro."—PLIN. *Hist. Nat.* lib. xxxvi. cap. 15.

Pliny — "monuments of the vanity of kings. The writers who have given us an account of them, are Herodotus, Artemidorus, Demetrius, &c.;" and he, Pliny, adds, "the authors of them, as a just punishment of their vanity, remain unknown:" his words are, "justissimo casu obliteratis tantæ vanitatis auctoribus."

We have already remarked, that the Greek and Roman historians, particularly Herodotus, Diodorus, and even Pomponius Mela, were fond of recording fables: they were as willing to be marvellous on the subject of the Egyptians as Livy showed himself when he wrote his history of the early days of the Roman republic. Every account of Thebes, and of the civilisation of Egypt, that has reached us, must be looked on as emanating more from the poet's imagination, than from the accurate pen of the historian.

Pomponius Mela, when speaking of Egypt, repeats the hyperboles of Strabo, and states, from this writer, that ten thousand men could go out of each of the hundred gates of Thebes. This is a false interpretation and gross exaggeration of Homer's words, who says, that two hundred chariots could issue from each gate. "A strange assertion!" exclaims a learned French writer*, "for in this false statement the historian even outruns the poet in exaggeration."

* M. Jomard, de l'Ancienne Egypte, vol. ii. p. 113.

Herodotus and Diodorus inform us, that the population of ancient Egypt was divided into castes like those of India; and that the priests formed the first caste, and instructed their children in two sorts of science, the study of which was their peculiar province. The first consisted of writing by hieroglyphics, and the mysteries of their religion; the latter were geometry and arithmetic; for, as the river, periodically overflowing, changed the face of the land, and confounded the marks or signs of property, it could only remain with those learned in geometry, and who could measure the arouras *, to assign to each person what belonged to him, and enable the monarch to secure his tribute.†

The former of these writers tells us, that he was informed by the Egyptian priests in his days, that Sesostris had divided the land among the population, apportioning to each man an equal share, on condition of his paying an annual tribute. If the Nile overflowed and confounded these portions of soil, the proprietors appealed to the king, who sent surveyors to the spot, and the land was re-measured by the priests, who exercised great power over a people little elevated above slavery. That the priests were a highly privileged class, is evident from all the accounts that have reached us.

Great works have at many periods been under-

* Spaces of land, each containing about one hundred and fifty square feet.

† Diodor. cap. 24. et 29.

taken in Egypt. Nechos (the Pharaoh Necho of Scripture), who succeeded Psammetichus, attempted, according to Herodotus, to open a communication between the Nile and the Red Sea, but failed in his attempt. Generally, however, the stupendous designs of Egyptian monarchs were accomplished, from their great command of human labour; but this forced labour shows rather a low than a high state of civilisation in the community. If the caprice of a monarch could force an entire population, either as slaves, as a conquered people, or as subjects, to toil during successive generations in erecting such useless works as the Pyramids, instead of building comfortable habitations for themselves, it cannot be imagined the people could be in any manner civilised. It is observed by Pliny*, that the Pyramids exhibit the senseless vanity of the despot by whom they were erected. Another eminent ancient writer† thinks these structures were built under a tyrannical power, to keep the population occupied, and to prevent rebellion. They are also attributed to a desire in the monarch to transmit his name to posterity. These suppositions answer our purpose in quoting them, which is to show, that although some improvements in the arts, and even in science, might be made by individuals, civilisation was not in any manner extended, and the mass of the Egyptian population was in a degraded and barbarous state.

* Hist. Nat. lib. xxxvi. † Aristotle.

We may here be permitted to hazard an observation in reference to the monuments of antiquity which are now remaining either in this country (Egypt), in Greece, Rome, or other parts of the world. On considering the magnificent cities and structures erected in former ages, either Thebes, Baalbec, Palmyra, the Pyramids, the Coliseum, &c., we are naturally struck with awe and amazement at the magnitude of the undertaking, and are inclined to imagine, that the civilisation or power of a government or people must have been considerable, to attempt and bring to maturity such gigantic and laborious works. This conclusion, however, seems not warranted. There is no doubt that, in ancient days, as well as in the present, great individual talent was, and is to be, found. Individual talent or information must not, however, be confounded with the general talent or information spread through the community. We cannot therefore but think that these great works originated from a despotic power exercised over an ignorant and uncivilised population, over a mass of people, either confined in slavery, or controlled under the iron grasp of despotism. Take for example the Pyramids: the labour employed, or rather wasted, on these monuments, would have provided the comfort and enjoyment of millions, if expended either on their private dwellings, or in any manner for individual shelter. A population forced to work on such useless masses, could not in any manner be

civilised, according to our comprehension of that word. The same remark will apply to nearly all the monuments of antiquity. As nations advance in civilisation, and as the wealth of communities increases, useless monuments lessen in proportion. How few great works of a useless character have been undertaken of late years in Great Britain! The energies and power of our empire might, if so directed, raise works incomparably superior to any production of former ages: such, however, is not the case. The reason is evident. In a civilised and free country the energies and wealth, or command of labour, is employed by individuals for their own convenience, comfort, or luxury; in former days, where the command of the labour of the nation, or the means for payment of that labour, depended on one man, there the population was forced to apply their means and energies to gratify his wishes, not to their individual advantage. Even in the middle ages this appears to have been the case.

As civilisation advanced, and in modern days, great structures formed by the labour of an entire people are less common: the labourers must now be paid. In those days the stupendous edifices we see were the labour of slaves, or of a conquered people. The result is that no national undertaking is attempted except for the benefit of the community, and the mass of wealth and labour is expended on individual comfort.

We cannot, therefore, but arrive at the conclusion, that these magnificent works of antiquity denote deficiency of civilisation and of public opinion, certainly not an improved state of society.

We have made this remark here, not to be misunderstood in the following chapters; but it will apply equally to Greece, Rome, and other nations of antiquity, where the fine structures we admire evince the genius of the designer and skill of the architect, but their execution denotes the slavery of a people, and their degraded state.

Among the Greeks, and even with the Romans, very great contempt was entertained for Egyptian superstition and information. Both the historians and poets of the ancients exercised their wit and satire on the absurdities which they deemed themselves too well informed to imitate. "The Egyptian superstition, of all the most contemptible and abject, was frequently prohibited: the temples of Serapis and Isis demolished, and their worshippers banished from Rome and Italy."* Even Herodotus admits the excessive ignorance of the Egyptians, and the Roman poet ridicules their idolatry:

> "Who knows not there is nothing vile or odd
> Which brain-sick Egypt turns not to a god?
> Some of the fools the crocodile adore;
> The Ibis, cramm'd with snakes, as many more.

* Dion Cassius, lib. lxxx. p. 232.

A long-tail'd ape the suppliants most admire,
Where a half Memnon tunes his magic lyre.
Whole towns in one place river fish revere;
To sea fish some as piously adhere.
Nay, vegetables here take rank divine;
On various sorts they deem profane to dine.
Oh, holy nations! where the gardens bear
A crop of deities through the live-long year." *

On the ceilings of some temples and edifices in the vicinity of Thebes, the signs of the Zodiac, very similar to their present figures, have been found engraved. Music also appears to have been known to the Egyptians, as well as the arts mentioned before. It has been seen that they were acquainted with the system of land-surveying, or measurement, and a census of the population was occasionally taken. Beyond this, everything is hidden in the clouds of antiquity. There does not appear to have been a middle class, or any other than an extensive ignorant and idolatrous mass; but if trade or commerce had existed to any extent, a middle class would have been formed. "We are in the dark concerning the Babylonian, Assyrian, Chaldean, Bactrian, and Egyptian monarchies. We know little more of them than Scripture occasionally relates concerning their barbarous cruelty, bestial pride, and extravagant folly." †

A writer of this day, in his profound researches

* Juvenal, Sat. xv.

† Algernon Sidney, "Discourses concerning Government."

into the antiquities of Egypt, says, — "In describing the arts by which tyranny aimed of old at keeping the people in subjection, Aristotle enumerates, among the most efficacious, that of utterly impoverishing them, by erecting prodigiously expensive structures, such as the Pyramids of Egypt, and the magnificent dedications of Cypselus. The Theban kings appear to have been deeply versed in these arts. To their slaves, the motive assigned — if they condescended to assign any — was, of course, piety towards the gods; and with persons of a character analogous to that of their slaves, they have obtained, in succeeding ages, credit for so holy an intention. But, with their political motives, a large proportion of mere vanity was probably mingled, advancing recklessly to its own gratification, through the sweat, and toil, and privations of the poor. And to these united incentives we owe the architectural grandeur of such edifices as the temple of Karnak. This temple had been one of the instruments by which the political degradation of the Egyptians had been effected. Priestly craft, combined with the absolute power of kings, sank them, in many respects, below the level of the brute; and legislation, if the regulations by which despots hedge round their power deserve the name, divided them, if there be any faith in history, into castes, by which the majority were condemned to pursue, from father to son, without hope or chance of a favourable change, the most sordid and servile drudgery.

From the enjoyments and pleasures of science, literature, and arts, they were necessarily excluded for ever. For, since the members of one caste could not encroach on the province of another, all persons not of the sacerdotal order, which preserved the monopoly of intellectual pursuits, must necessarily have been plunged in the profoundest ignorance, which will account for the prevalence of human sacrifices so late as the age of Amasis; and of animal worship, until their bestial gods were put to flight by Christianity. Ancient Egypt, if we draw aside the veil cast over it by ignorant admiration, was nothing but a nest of priests and slaves; for despotism itself was here subordinate to the sacerdotal tyrants, who either elevated a member of their order to the throne, or, when the sceptre had passed by unavoidable accident into the hands of another, associated its possessor with themselves. Thus it happened that Egypt produced neither poets, nor historians, nor artists, properly so called. By all these forms of intellectual exertion men address themselves to the people; and in Egypt the people were not only incapable of deriving either profit or advantage from such labours, but were absolutely excluded by the law from enjoyments of this exalted kind. Hence, to return to the point from which I set out, though the genius of the nation would appear to have qualified them for excelling in technical pursuits, none of the arts attained to per-

fection in this country, and the greater number languished in cold mediocrity." *

Niebuhr, the best historian of the Roman commonwealth, says, — "The history of Joseph, as given in the forty-seventh chapter of Genesis, is a most dangerous precedent for an artful man having power. 'Give me thy land and liberty, and I will give thee bread.'" The words of the sacred historian to which he alludes are these: — "And Joseph bought all the land of Egypt for Pharaoh, for the Egyptians sold every man his field, because the famine prevailed over them; so the land became Pharaoh's. And as for the people, he removed them to cities from one end of the borders of Egypt even to the other end thereof. *Only the land of the priests bought he not;* for the priests had a portion assigned them of Pharaoh, and did eat their portion which Pharaoh gave them: wherefore they sold not their lands. Then Joseph said unto the people, Behold, I have bought you this day, and your land for Pharaoh: Lo, here is seed for you, and ye shall sow the land. And it shall come to pass in the increase, that you shall give the fifth part unto Pharaoh, and four parts shall be your own, for seed of the field, and for your food, and for them of your households, and for food for your little ones. And they said, Thou hast saved our lives: let us find grace in the sight of my lord, and

* Mr. St. John's Researches in Egypt.

we will be Pharaoh's servants. And Joseph made a law over the land of Egypt unto this day, that Pharaoh should have the fifth part; except the land of the priests only, which became not Pharaoh's." *

The ruin of Egypt was the consequence of despotism in the monarchs, and slavery and immorality in the people. These are always the elements of decay. Even the site of some of its great towns cannot be traced —

"Ruins whose very dust hath ceased to be."—J. E. READE.

Ozymandias, a magnificent king of Egypt in a remote period, the first monarch who formed a library, caused a colossal statue of himself to be erected, bearing a remarkable inscription. This survived when other vast works to which the inscription referred were utterly obliterated. The genius of a modern poet † will transmit to future times the memory of this vain appeal, when the statue itself shall be hidden under encroaching sand. These are his verses:—

"I saw a traveller from an antique land
Who said,—'Two vast and trunkless legs of stone
Stand in the desert. Near them, on the sand,
Half sunk, a shatter'd visage lies, whose frown,
And wrinkled lip, and sneer of cold command,
Tell that its sculptor well those passions read
Which yet survive, stamp'd on these lifeless things,
The hand that mock'd them, and the heart that fed:

* Genesis, xlvii. 20 — 26.
† Shelley.

And on the pedestal these words appear: —
'My name is Ozymandias, King of Kings:
Look on my works, ye Mighty, and despair!'
Nothing beside remains. Round the decay
Of that colossal wreck, boundless and bare,
The lone and level sands stretch far away."

From every investigation we can make respecting ancient Egypt, under great want of historical accuracy, (for Herodotus and Diodorus had not, even in their days, much information upon the subject,) it would appear that the Egyptian community was not civilised; that the magnificent structures were the work of an enslaved population, and that whatever knowledge existed was confined entirely to the priests, until the conquest by Cambyses, when they gradually relapsed into ignorance, as that conqueror and his successors on the throne never restored the priesthood to its former importance.

Except the mighty Pyramids, nothing remains of ancient Egypt but ruins and tombs. Isaiah prophesied against her, and Ezekiel foretold her fall.— "The sword of the king of Babylon shall come upon thee. By the swords of the mighty will I cause thy multitudes to fall, the terrible of the nations, all of them: and they shall spoil the pomp of Egypt, and all the multitude thereof shall be destroyed."

Ezekiel, xxxii. 11, 12.

CHAPTER II.

ANCIENT GREECE.

exion of the Inhabitants of Egypt, India, Greece, and Italy. — The Ancient Greeks deficient in the Requisites for Public Opinion. — Greek Barbarism and Absence of Moral Principle. — Licentiousness of Greek Females and Prevalence of Infanticide. — Commerce in the Grecian Republics extremely limited. — Extent of Slavery in these States. — Middle Class. — Slaves, or Helots. — Reasons for the Absence of Commerce and Manufactures. — Fabulous Narrations of Greek Historians and Philosophers. — Passion for War and Violence. — Downfall of the Grecian States.

It is a generally received opinion, that whatever information had in ancient days been acquired by any people, was derived from Egypt or from India, whence it flowed to Greece, and then to Rome and other parts of Europe. But unlike other inundations, as it extended itself it grew more shallow, until at length nearly all information was lost, and absorbed in the barbarism and ignorance of the Goths, Vandals, and other rude tribes of the North of Europe.

It might appear desirable to trace the source of information in India as well as in Egypt; but, as whatever degree of information the Greeks possessed was imbibed, in the first instance, from Egypt, we

shall save much time and labour in beginning our inquiries from the last-mentioned country. To enter into the wide field of Asiatic research would be tedious to our readers, and answer no purpose, especially as all traditions on that subject are obscure at the present day. One of the most learned of our countrymen, who visited India, remarks—"The Egyptians, or Ethiopians (for they were clearly the same people,) had indubitably a common origin with the old natives of India, as the affinity of their languages and of their institutions, both religious and political, fully evince. The hieroglyphics of Egypt bear, indeed, a strong resemblance to the mythological sculptures and paintings of India."*

The same writer adds:—"We may reasonably conclude, that both Greeks and Hindus received a knowledge of the Zodiac and other information from an older nation, who first gave names to the luminaries of heaven, and from whom both Greeks and Hindus, as their similarity in language and religion fully evinces, had a common descent." He further states, "It is not the object of this essay to correct the historical errors, nor to defend the astronomers of India from the charge of gross ignorance in regard to the figure of the earth, and the distance of the heavenly bodies; I will only remark, that in our conversation with the Pandits, we must never confound the system of Jyautishicas or mathe-

* Sir William Jones's Discourses.

matical astronomers with that of the Paurânicas or poetical fabulists, for to such a confusion alone must we impute the many mistakes of Europeans on the subject of Indian science. A venerable mathematician, now in his 80th year, visited me lately at Crĭshnanagar, and part of his discourse was so applicable to the inquiries which I was then making, that as soon as he left me I committed it to writing. The Paurânicas, he said, will tell you, that our earth is a plane figure studded with eight mountains, and surrounded by seven seas." "I am strongly inclined to think," pursues Sir William, "that a connexion subsisted between the old idolatrous nations of Egypt, India, Greece, and Italy, long before they migrated to their respective settlements." *

The ancient Greeks have left to posterity imperishable records of their military achievements, and proofs of their intellectual elevation. Arts and arms, with them, flourished simultaneously; their architects †, orators, poets, philosophers, and sculptors, still survive in their works, and give laws to modern students. Human genius shone with great

* Sir W. Jones's Works, edited by Lord Teignmouth.

† It appears that the circular arch was not known to the Greeks in the early period of their history, otherwise their copious language would not have wanted a name, properly Greek, by which it could be distinguished. The Greeks knew something of the pointed arch at an angle of 45°, but the semicircular arch adopted by the Romans in the erection of bridges and aqueducts, was not known by them.

lustre in Greece, bequeathing rich evidences to succeeding generations. Its inextinguishable light, after streaming faintly through the middle ages, burst again into wide effulgence when man once more emerged from barbarism.

Such is the immortality of genius; but genius, in a few individuals, does not, as we have already remarked, imply information and prosperity in a people. In considering the state of ancient civilisation, let us not be tempted, by the intellectual glories of Greece, to form rash conclusions, and imagine that society had reached the most perfect state of which it is capable — that the science of government was thoroughly understood — that virtue characterised the people — or that all the requisites for the formation of civilisation, or of public opinion, might be found in the Hellenic states. In fact, this was not the case. In the Grecian republics, considerable activity and enterprise existed. They had a middle class, and a small lower class (the manual labour being performed by slaves); and there were few exceptions to the above ranks. Although the activity and intelligence of the Greeks, their proficiency in arts, and their great superiority over the barbarous nations by which they were surrounded, enabled them to form a middle class, yet this advance in social life was insufficient. The requisites for civilisation, as we have already defined them, were undeveloped; moral principle, founded on true religious faith, did not

exist, — nor were the means of circulating information adequate to the want.* Like the various populations of Asia, the Hellenic race advanced to a certain point or limit, and could advance no farther. "The sensual worship of nature, the basis of all heathenism, must have been very prejudicial to Greek morals. It gave rise to great corruption even in the more simple period of society: this already-prevalent corruption must have increased to a frightful extent in the general degradation of the state.†

Innumerable examples, afforded by the conduct of the Greeks in former days, abundantly prove their sanguinary barbarism, and total deficiency in moral principle. The massacre, in cold blood, of four thousand Athenians, by the Spartans, in the Hellespont‡; the reduction of many cities to an abject state of slavery by the Athenians; the extermination of the inhabitants of Melos and of the citizens of Hysia§; the slaughter of a thousand Mitylenians; the cruelties at Skione, Ægina, and Cythera‖; the precipitating neutral merchants or travellers into pits; the atrocities perpetrated in the civil war at Miletos, where the Gergethes, having beaten the townspeople, seized their child-

* As instances of want of facility of communication, Cicero says, that a messenger from Rome to Cilicia was forty-seven days on his journey. (*Epist. ad Att.*, lib. v. ep. 19.) From Rome to the south of Spain required forty days. — *Cicero, Epist. ad Fam.*, lib. x. p. 33.

† Schlegel's Phil. of Hist., vol. i. p. 338.

‡ Thucy., iii. 70. § Id. v. 83. ‖ Thucy.

ren; and threw them under the feet of oxen in their stalls to be destroyed; or the retaliation of the inhabitants, who, on being victorious in their turn, took all their prisoners, men, women, and children, covered them with pitch, and burnt them alive*; the annual massacre of the Helots, and the treachery of withdrawing the suppliants from their sanctuary and coolly butchering them,—all these acts bear evidence of Grecian barbarism, and of the absence of all moral principle.

Let us even look a little further into the habits of Hellenic society.

Neither war nor piracy was sufficient to supply the vast multitude of slaves whom the Greeks considered it necessary to retain. A race of kidnappers sprang up, who, as pirates, roamed about the shores of the Mediterranean, capturing solitary or unprotected individuals.† Nothing could be more atrocious than the cruelties practised on these defenceless beings.‡

The licentiousness of Greek women was universally notorious, and admitted by their own people in the days of Socrates.§ The conduct of the Greeks in their wars, and of the Spartans, par-

* Heracl. Pont. ap. Athen., xii. 26.

† Manners and Customs of Ancient Greece, St. John, vol. iii. p. 6.

‡ Pignor. de Servis, p. 5. Feith, Antiq. Hom., ii. 20.

§ Plat. de Legg., t. vii. p. 204.

ticularly in their marriages, bears a strong similitude to the manners of North American savages, when first discovered by Europeans. The immoral marriage of Cimon, son of Miltiades, was in accordance with the custom of the Greeks.* In short, the morals of the Greeks were as loose as those of perfect barbarians.

Children were commonly murdered in Thrace; the usual way was to place the infant in an earthen pot, and having taken him to some mountainous or desert place, abandon him there to perish with cold and hunger, or be devoured by wolves or birds of prey.

Some of the healthy and strong infants were preserved; others, when weak and delicate, were cast into a deep cavern at the foot of Mount Taygetus. This pit of death relieved the Spartans from further expences. All the surplus population was thrown into that gulph.

Much has been said of the extent of commerce of the ancient Greek republics, a subject of some importance in the inquiry as to the amount of civilisation they possessed. After investigating the question as far as the knowledge that can be obtained has enabled us, it does not appear that either commerce or trade existed in any part of Greece, except in the Athenian state. In the other republics, little appearance of any commerce is to be found.

We are indebted for very interesting accounts of the community in Attica to an able writer*, well known in the literature of this country, whose works on Greece evince his acquaintance with the manners of the ancient inhabitants, and the labour he bestowed in the consideration of their republics. This gentleman, although an enthusiastic admirer of the Greeks, admits that, with the exception of Attica, little trade ever existed formerly in that part of the world, which has been considered as the focus of ancient civilisation, and the cradle of all the arts and sciences then known. When attention is directed to the republic of Athens, by far the most advanced of any Grecian state in every respect, it appears that this community consisted of a number of citizens, who either captured or obtained slaves or helots from the countries bordering on the Mediterranean; that there scarcely existed any other than what would now be called a middle class, composed of all the citizens, and that the labour was performed by slaves or helots in Sparta. Even in their best days, the number of this middle class, which was never considerable, seems to have diminished. "The citizens of the Athenian commonwealth were never very great." † "During the most flourishing æra of the Athenians, the number of citizens gradually diminished from thirty to twenty-

* Mr. St. John.

† Gibbon's Roman Empire.

one thousand."* Now this being admitted, and there can exist no reasonable doubt as to its accuracy, how was it possible for twenty-one thousand men, with a slave population, to have an extensive commerce or manufactures, or to barter natural produce to any extent? Under the direction and control of the citizens, the slaves might probably erect those beautiful and elegant structures, the remains of which are so much admired, even at this day; but Grecian commerce, trade, and civilisation must have been vastly overrated.

A writer of the last century, not remarkable for his morality, thus gives his opinion of the Greek philosophy †: — "The Greek philosophers for the most part resembled the Greek historians mentioned by Strabo. Plato did so most eminently. The historians, observing how fond their countrymen were of those who wrote fables, turned history into romance, and studied to make their relations marvellous and agreeable, with little regard to truth; in which they were encouraged, after Alexander's expedition into Asia, by the difficulty of disproving anything they said of countries so remote. Just so did the philosophers in general, and Plato in particular. They took their ideas and notions superficially and inaccurately from the first appearances of things, and examined and verified them as little as the others

* Meursius de Fortunâ Atticâ, editio Casaubon. lib. vi. p. 272.

† Lord Bolingbroke, 2d Essay, sect. ix. p. 127.

did facts: these ideas and notions were combined and composed by them, as every man's fancy suggested: and they had, besides these and the inexhaustible storehouse of fancy, as many 'entia rationis' as might supply all their occasions. Thus the Greek philosophy became a chaos of wild, discordant opinions and hypotheses, concerning divine and human, intellectual and corporeal nature, which could neither prove themselves, nor be reconciled to one another. They were the various offspring of imagination — of imagination that affected to rove in the divine sphere,— that of possibility, and would not be confined to the human, — that of actuality. Those philosophical romances, in the light in which they appear to us, may be compared not amiss to 'Amadis of Gaul,' to 'Pierceforest,' and the rest of those heroical legends, which were written in defiance of history, chronology, and common sense, as the others were in defiance of nature and real knowledge, which were the amusements of ignorant ages, and which are feigned so agreeably by Cervantes to have turned the brains of Don Quixote."

These sentiments, emanating from no ordinary man — but from one who is known to have admired the ancients in a greater degree than the moderns — are worthy of attention, especially as he is borne out by a higher authority. Discussing the nature of Greek philosophy, and the character of Greek philosophers, in his "Paradise Regained," Milton thus writes: —

"He who receives
Light from above, from the fountain of light,
No other doctrine needs, though granted true;
But these are false, or little else but dreams,
Conjectures, fancies, built on nothing firm.
The first and wisest of them all * profess'd
To know this only, that he nothing knew;
The next † to fabling fell, and smooth conceits;
A third sort doubted all things, though plain sense ‡;
Others in virtue plac'd felicity,
But virtue join'd with riches and long life §;
The Stoic last, in philosophic pride,
By *him* called virtue; and his virtuous man,
Wise, perfect in himself, and all possessing
Equal to God, oft shames not to prefer,
As fearing God nor man, contemning all
Wealth, pleasure, pain or torment, death or life,
Which, when he lists, he leaves, or boasts he can;
For all his tedious talk is but vain boast,
Or subtle shifts conviction to evade.
Alas! what can they teach and not mislead,
Ignorant of themselves, of God much more!"

Another writer, favourable to the Greeks, and who generally extols the ancients, says, — "Their passion for war and violence engaged them in everlasting struggles with their neighbours, developed over-much their fierce and destructive qualities, and threw into comparative shade such of their propensities as were gentler and more humane. War by land, piracy by sea, filled the whole country with incessant alarm. The laws of war were proportionably savage. It was customary either to

* Socrates.
† Plato. ‡ The Pyrrhonians.
§ The Academics and Peripatetics.

give no quarter, or to devote all prisoners taken to servitude. Every petty state was filled with unfortunate captives reduced to the humblest conditions.'

Innumerable examples of the ferocity of the ancient Greeks are found in various writers.†

In Magna Græcia, for example, although there existed a code of well-defined legislation, yet by what sort of people was that country occupied? Take the Sybarites, whose name has descended to posterity with infamy; the Tarentines,—look at their treatment of the Roman messengers.‡ Among the people the most unblushing and disgusting profligacy was common, with all the immorality and all the vices that can disgrace human nature.

In referring to the records of that part of Greece situated between the Ionian Sea and the Propontis, we find mutual jealousies and rivalries, constant feuds, dissensions, and wars, carried on to an unexampled and destructive extent, and continuing for centuries together with scarcely any intermission. To this general corruption of manners may be added levity of character, a total disregard of decency, laxity of social relations, and grossness of

* Thirlwall, i. p. 180.

† Mitford, i. p. 181. The Sauromatæ did not allow their women to marry until they mounted on horseback, fought in battle, and had slain three enemies. See Hippocrates de Aër. et Loc., s. 78.

‡ Gillies' Greece.

political institutions. Such were the causes of the downfall of the several Greek states,—not, as some historians assert, from their over-civilisation.

If any further instances of the state of society, and of morals, and of the deficiency in the elements of that civilisation which we have defined, be required, reference may be made to Xenophon. Mem. i.; Laertius, ii. sect. 98. 102.; Anto. et Max. Serm. 37.; Athen., lib. x. p. 422.; Grotius de Jure Belli.

CHAPTER III.

ANCIENT ROME.

Our Ignorance of the early History of the Roman Commonwealth. — Senators, Equites, and Mass of the People. — Decline of Virtue, Patriotism, and Discipline under the Empire. — Government of conquered Provinces harsh and oppressive. — Prevalence of absolute Power. — Consolidation of the Roman Conquests destructive of the early moral and poetical Interest of her History. — Influence of the upper and middle Classes destroyed by the Admission of the Rabble to vote in Elections. — The excessively luxurious Habits of the Romans, and their Desire for the Possession of vast Numbers of Slaves, gradually rooted out the middle Classes. — Shocking Depravity and Licentiousness prevalent among all Classes during the Decadence of the Empire. — Easy Conquest by Barbarians of the degenerate Romans. — The Emperor Constantine's Adoption of Christianity. — Christianity the surest means of civilising Nations. — Consequence of the Degeneracy and Immorality of the Romans.

THE state of society in the commencement of the Roman Commonwealth can only be learnt from traditions known in the closing days of that republic. Even Cato and Livy appear to have been at a loss for information on the early history of their country. If *they* felt ignorant on the subject, what can *we* know, after a lapse of nineteen centuries?

With the exception of Cato's "Origines," the Romans had no historian in their own language who was readable.* Niebuhr, the historian of the early days of Rome, tells us, that Livy first taught the Romans what history they had: his wish to encircle, by the graces of his bewitching style, the great actions and victories of their ancestors with the noblest ornaments of civic and republican virtue, was heightened by his desire of beholding in the deeds of former times the remains of the brazen age coming down to his own days. He was gifted with a highly brilliant talent for seizing the characteristic features of humanity, and for narration with the imaginative power of a poet, without the faculty of versifying, or the desire to do it. Even those primitive ages, when the heathen deities were fabled to walk among mankind, he would not absolutely reject; all that was related, provided it was not inconsistent with man's earthly condition, he would readily admit.

The people in the early days of Rome were divided into three classes: the senators, who were householders on a small scale; the equites, who each possessed a horse; and the mass of the people. These formed some sort of resemblance to an upper, middle, and lower class: this state of society was found in that age, before the extensive conquests of the Romans had given them the wealth of the world, and the command of its labour. Without attempting to

* Cicero de Legg., 1, 2, 3., where even Cato is not excepted.

enter into any detailed account of these early days, it may be observed, that the republic continued so long as the three classes were in existence, and some semblance of probity and virtue was to be found in the community. When, however, the victorious legions proclaimed an emperor, and the power of the senate was destroyed, by degrees, all Roman patriotism and discipline gradually diminished, and sank into disuse, until the fall of that mighty empire. As Milton observes, "Liberty, sought out of season, in a corrupt and degenerate age, brought Rome to a farther slavery."

The Roman Commonwealth grew into power by its internal policy, its strict discipline, and the energy of its population. The martial courage of the people, assisted by military organisation, gave them a thirst for conquest. From their superiority in the art of war, they were as certain of victory over the barbarous tribes in their neighbourhood as the first conquerors of the New World over America. The wealth of vanquished nations enriched Rome, and the subjugated populations became the slaves of her citizens. In the first instance, the Italian states became the victims of Roman power, and subsequently nearly all Europe, and part of Asia, fell under the same domination.

All historians agree that the domination of Rome over her conquered provinces was harsh, her judgments and punishments cruel, and her exactions extensive and oppressive. When Corinth and Carthage

were destroyed by Mummius and Scipio respectively, we see evidences of the savage cruelty with which the enemies of Rome were treated; we discern the want of morality and virtue of her proconsuls and generals, in the robberies and spoliations they perpetrated.

"A multitude held together by force, though under one and the same head, is not properly united; nor does such a body make *a people*. 'Tis the social league, confederacy, and mutual consent, founded in some common good or interest, which joins the members of a community, and makes a people ONE. Absolute power annuls *the public;* and where there is no *public*, or constitution, there is, in reality, no mother-country, or nation."*

Nothing can be more true than the above observation of Lord Shaftesbury. Thus despotism, by annihilating, for a time, the voice of the public, ensures, sooner or later, a terrible retribution. No government on earth is so safe as that which exists in accordance with public opinion.

"In the progress of events, when the Roman conquests were consolidated into one mass, the history loses the moral and poetical interest of the earlier centuries; indeed, it had already been disturbed for some time by convulsions and atrocities, and the decay of every national virtue."*

* Shaftesbury's Miscellaneous Reflections.

When the rabble of Italy were admitted to vote in the elections at Rome, the influence of the upper and middle classes was annihilated." Enormous wealth, gained by Asiatic conquest, supplied those classes for a time; but not being created by commerce or manufactures, it resembled that obtained by Spain from her American colonies: instead of increasing and flowing in a continued and fertilising stream, its effects were baneful, and caused idleness, rather than excited industry.†

But public virtue declined fast, even in the latter days of the Republic. The infusion of Asiatic blood into Italy from Delos, where ten thousand Syrian slaves might find purchasers in a single day, shows the luxury of the Romans, and produced evils which Tiberius Gracchus, the tribune, attempted ineffectually to control. "He was slain carrying his Agrarian laws, only a few years after the establishment of the slave market at Delos. The right of private property, of which Gracchus was altogether careless, forms, indeed, the main pillar of civil society; yet it cannot be doubted that the accumulation of estates among the few, and the consequent abuse of exorbitant wealth, filled Italy with slaves instead of citizens: destroyed the habits of rural industry among the people at large, and gradually rooted out those middle classes of men, which con-

* Niebuhr, Hist. of Rome, vol. i. p. 29.
† Montesquieu, Esprit des Lois.

stitute the strength, the worth, and the best hopes of every well-regulated commonwealth." *

Like the Greeks, the Romans were deficient in the requisites for civilisation and public opinion. That greatest and most essential element of national worth and dignity, — sound religious faith, whence moral principle emanates, — was unknown. Facility of intercourse did not exist, and there were no other means for communication of knowledge than could be afforded by manuscripts, or by oral transmission, which generally perverted what it sought to preserve. Although a desire might arise in the breasts of a few patriots or enlightened men to improve the people, such attempts were rendered abortive from the deficiency of an intelligent middle class. With an extensive lower class, destitute of principle, and luxurious, corrupt, and abandoned leaders, it was impossible for the Romans to fall into any other form of government than an absolute despotism, the only kind of rule that can be established in a nation so circumstanced.

Not only did liberty perish at this period, but arts and literature felt equally the baneful effects of tyranny.

"'Twas the fate of Rome to have scarce an intermediate age or single period of time, between the rise of arts and fall of liberty. No sooner had that nation begun to lose the roughness and barba-

* Gillies' Greece, vol. iv. p. 108.

rity of their manners, and learn of Greece to form their heroes, their orators, and poets on a right model, than, by their unjust attempts on the liberty of the world, they justly lost their own. With their liberty, they lost not only their force of eloquence, but even their style and language itself. The poets who afterwards rose among them, were mere forced and unnatural plants. Their two most accomplished, who came last and closed the scene, were plainly such as had seen the days of liberty, and felt the sad effects of its departure. Nor had these been ever brought in play otherwise than through the friendship of the famed Mæcenas, who turned a prince, naturally cruel and barbarous, to the love and courtship of the Muses. These tutoresses formed in their royal pupil a new nature. They taught him how to charm mankind. They were more to him than his arms or military virtue; and, more than fortune herself, assisted him in his greatness, and made his usurped dominion so enchanting to the world, that it could see without regret its chains of bondage firmly rivetted. The corrupting sweets of such a poisonous government were not indeed long-lived. The bitter soon succeeded; and, in the issue, the world was forced to bear with patience those natural and genuine tyrants who succeeded to this specious machine of arbitrary and universal power. The fatal form of government was become too natural; and the world, which had bent under it, and was become slavish and dependent,

had neither power nor will to help itself. The only deliverance it could expect was from the merciless hands of the barbarians, and a total dissolution of that enormous empire and despotic power, which the best hands could not preserve from being destructive to human nature. For even barbarity and gothicism were already entered into arts, ere the savages had made any impression on the Empire. Not a statue, not a medal, not a tolerable piece of architecture, could show itself afterwards. Philosophy, wit, and learning fell; and ignorance and darkness overspread the world, and fitted it for the chaos and ruin which ensued." *

Anathematising the people of another community (the Athenians), Shakspeare has put the following words into the mouth of Timon:—

> "All is oblique;
> There's nothing level in our cursed natures,
> But direct villany."

Thus in Rome the enormities of individuals kept pace with and encouraged the profligacy of the people. The atrocious and repellent conduct of Julius Cæsar is well known; and the infamy of his successors is equally notorious. Indeed the Roman Empire included "a race of men who seemed to vie with each other in the commission of as grand crimes, and in the perpetration of as odious vices, as ever disgraced humanity."

* Shaftesbury's Characteristics.

The picture drawn by Juvenal of the abominations that infected the whole frame of Roman society — that moral leprosy from which neither age nor sex was free — those audacious vices, ostentatiously professed and openly practised, are hideous in the perusal, even when conveyed to us by indignant satire. Speaking of his contemporaries, the poet says —

> "No age can go beyond us: future times
> Can add no further to the present crimes.
> Our sons but the same things can wish and do;
> Vice is at stand, and at the highest flow.
> Some may, perhaps, demand what Muse can yield
> Sufficient strength for such a spacious field?
> From whence can be deriv'd so large a vein,
> Bold truths to speak, and, spoken, to maintain;
> When godlike freedom is so far bereft
> The noble mind, that scarce the name is left?" *

In giving the "argument" of, or, more properly speaking, a commentary on, Juvenal's Sixth Satire, Dryden thus expresses himself: — "They" (his readers) "will peruse with wonder and abhorrence the vices of an age which was the most infamous of any on record. They will bless themselves when they behold those examples related of Domitian's time. They will give back to antiquity those monsters it produced."

But it was not only in the vices arising out of libertinism that the Romans, at certain periods of

* Juvenal, Sat. i., Dryden's trans.

their history, indulged; for, as if needing a novelty in crime, they sought gratification in cruelties from the perpetration of which even savage tribes might shrink. "The gladiatorial fights under the emperors became, like bread, one of the most indispensable necessaries to the people, and one of the most important objects of concern to its rulers. The Romans were delighted, in the games, to contemplate men (devoted to certain death) contending with savage animals. 'Christianos ad liones,' (the Christians to the lions), was the cry that resounded in the circus. A thirst for blood, after being long the predominant passion of the leaders, became an actual craving in the people — *a festive entertainment for the multitude!*" * — "We might cast an eye upon the manners of Rome, Carthage, and many other states in their last declining period, where we should behold such tragic scenes of cruelty, impiety, and oppression as would confound the most sanguine advocate for the manners of antiquity." †

That the Roman empire should decline into barbarism under such circumstances, does not appear surprising. During the three centuries that elapsed previously to the fall of that vast and unwieldy fabric of despotism and injustice, let us contemplate the conduct of the emperors, and ascertain whether any improvement had taken place. "Their contempt for human suffering, their delight in blood,

* Schlegel.

† Shaftesbury's Estimate, 8vo edit., p. 27.

the wild ebullitions of their passions under temporary excitement, their treatment of women, and their degrading personal vices, all which were common in the people, show the state of moral principle at this period."

A distinguished historian and politician says — "In looking to the governments of antiquity, — they fell by the gradual decay of national virtue, and the corruption of the people themselves as well as their leaders. In Sparta and in Rome, this corruption may in the beginning be attributed to an influx of wealth; but the precipitate fall of a state like that of Rome into an abyss of profligacy and venality, can only happen when the whole people are stained by political and moral vices."*

Governments flourish only when power is lodged in the hands of the best men; but during the reigns of Augustus and his successors, the sovereignty was gained by the worst men through interested connivance, fraud, or violence; and it is not surprising that such monarchs should promote agents who most resembled themselves. Augustus was worse in the beginning than in the latter end of his reign; but his execrable successor, Tiberius, grew more wicked every day. In his seclusion at Capreæ, he meditated nothing but impure indulgences and political mischief, having Macro and Sejanus always ready to execute his detestable designs. Caligula

* Lord J. Russell, English Con., p. 460.

was inconvenienced because he could find none equal to himself in all manner of villanies. The stupidity and drunkenness of Claudius were as injurious to the empire as the savage fury of his predecessor. The existence of the monster Nero was a stain upon the world; and Galba no sooner became emperor, than the virtues which had brightened his early career disappeared, and he rivalled the rest in tyranny and dishonesty. His murderer, Otho, was elected to succeed him, for no better reason than that the latter had been the associate of Nero's shameful pleasures. The instruments, therefore, were as base as their masters; and under such circumstances, all evils came in like a flood. Public virtue was stifled, and Rome was filled with a miserable rabble, who cared for nothing but stage plays and mere subsistence. When the Commonwealth was destroyed, valour and virtue were torn up by the roots, and Roman power began to languish.*

So vile a state of things carried with it the seeds of destruction. "Vengeance," says the poet, "will sit above our faults." At length the rude people of the north imitated the skilful military tactics and discipline of their conquerors; and being more numerous, capable of greater endurance, and equal in courage, were not likely to fail when opposed to the enervated and vicious rabble of Italy. The

* See Algernon Sidney on Government.

ardour, the enthusiasm, the certainty of conquest, and the discipline that led the Roman soldier to an easy victory in the days of the Republic, no longer existed. His bravery might remain, but its moral and vital adjuncts were gone. The savage and hardy tribes of the north felt in their turn the stimulants of war and conquest, and subjugated their former oppressors.

From a deficiency of the elements that constitute true civilisation, we find the Romans, in place of advancing, resemble the Greeks,—arrive at a certain point, and then retrograde into barbarism; their oligarchies were more severe, their monarchies more despotic than even amongst the former.

It seems unnecessary to go further into the inquiry; all we need add is, that the fall of the empire of the Cæsars was the consequence of the vices and pollutions that originated and existed individually and collectively in the community. Although a considerable period elapsed from the reign of Constantine to that of Justinian, and the former had professed himself a Christian, yet the precepts of Christianity were little followed; and most truly has it been affirmed*, that the intolerant maxims of the Emperor and his priesthood were as unfriendly to the moral principle and dignity of man, as they were hostile to the true interests of religion and of human happiness.

* Montesquieu.

But even Constantine was unable to emancipate himself from the flagitious propensities of his predecessors. A contemporary writer, of whose remarks we are happy to avail ourselves, thus writes: "Constantine's brutal usage of his niece, the daughter of Diocletian, was an act of cold and merciless villany towards an unoffending child; and the suffocation of his wife Faûsta, the daughter of Maximilian, the mother of his surviving family, and the companion of his bed for twenty-five years, though, it is alleged, the guilty prompter of his domestic enormities, is, we fear, nothing better than a regal crime of a most unnatural complexion, committed under circumstances of a most revolting kind. Acts like these —and be it remembered they were not unparalleled in his own or preceding times—must be judged by the political and moral codes of the fourth, not of the nineteenth, century; but this admission, which removes the question out of the forum of conscience, and transfers it to the fluctuating tribunal of ethical expediency, is an additional confirmation of the truth, that we deal with a totally different form of civilisation from our own when we treat of the Grecian and Roman epochs of history. Constantine's conversion is an incident rather of general than of personal interest, for over the individual it would not seem to have exerted the slightest controlling influence."*

* Frazer.

This emperor's adoption of Christianity in the latter period of his life was productive of much good to his country. Whether he was impressed with a sense of the truth of its Divine origin "it is impossible to say, and it certainly would be difficult to prove it from his conduct; but he probably had penetration enough to discover that the new faith would supply what was much wanted at that time, —a national centre of unity, and that the vigour of its maxims, and the purity of its precepts, would together constitute an effective antagonist to the waning spirit of Heathenism in Europe, and the rising energy of Magianism in Asia. Nor ought we to forget that the practical benefits of its adoption by the Greek Emperor were immediate and visible. The laws concerning slavery were remodelled and mitigated, abduction and adultery were visited with severe punishments, divorce was subjected to intelligible restrictions, and some of the more obvious vices of the age were removed by the improved tone of public opinion." *

Speaking of the introduction of Christianity, a French writer exclaims, "Admirable result! the Christian religion, which seems to have no other end in view but our happiness in a future state, is, moreover, the cause of our security and enjoyment in the present. Let us place before our sight the continual massacres perpetrated by the Greek and Roman leaders and emperors, and then turn our

* Frazer.

eyes to the utter extermination of towns, and even nations, by those chiefs, Timor and Genghis Khan, who laid waste and depopulated Asia; and we must conclude that to Christianity we are indebted, not alone for the concession of political rights by the ruling powers, but in wars, for a certain respect for the privileges of mankind which were previously unregarded." *

Some writers have expressed surprise that when Christianity was professed by Constantine no greater improvement should have taken place in the population of the Empire. The answer is ready; it was professed in name only, but existed not in reality, nor were the principles of morality, founded on pure religious faith, known in the community.

"We think we shall only speak to the convictions of the more intelligent of our readers when we say, that the condition of mankind every where, and more particularly in the East, required an absolute revolution in the system of religious opinions then prevalent in the world. The earlier virtues of the Greeks and Romans had struggled, and struggled in vain, with the growing corruption which poured in upon them from all quarters; and the scholar is well aware that the moral desolation which then fell upon the earth, and polluted the very sources of human action, was but feebly resisted by the researches of a few gifted men, who endeavoured by the unaided efforts of reason to grasp the mighty

* Montesquieu, Esprit des Lois, liv. xx. chap. iii.

things of God and of futurity. The social qualities of the Greeks have been unduly over-rated, and the same may be said of the Romans; nor is it possible to imagine anything more utterly degrading than the domestic history of the successors of Alexander in Asia and Africa, or to fancy anything more revolting than the universal profligacy which overspread the heathen world after the reduction of the East by the Romans. Murder, and every variety of unutterable crime, characterised that declining age; and, had not the Almighty mercifully interposed, the human race ran the risk of being extinguished by the pressure of its own detestable vices."*

The colossal fabric of Roman power, established by the discipline and valour of its citizens, which had taken so many years in its formation, fell from want of the requisites for civilisation, as other powers before and since that period have done, and must do in future, if devoid of these elements.

From the east, the Turk, the Parthian, and the Persian gradually advanced to the west, while the pastoral and wandering tribes of barbarians, with more courage, energy, and even moral principle, gradually settled themselves on the ruins of the Empire.

Frazer.

ENGLAND.

CHAPTER I.

THE CONQUEST.

The Heptarchy a confused State. — Conquest of England by the Duke of Normandy the last territorial Conquest in Western Europe. — A Step gained towards Civilisation by the Results of the Conquest. — Social State of England after that Event. — Slavery under which the English People were held by William.

LIKE most other countries, England, in her early days, was subject to the attacks and conquests of foreign invaders, and also to internal commotions. The Heptarchy, a very disjointed political condition for an island like ours, had been dissolved in 828 by Egbert, King of Wessex, who, by conquest, assumed the sovereignty of the country, excepting only, if they may be called an exception, the kingdoms of Mercia, East Anglia, and Northumbria, whose chiefs he held as tributaries. To him succeeded a line of Saxon kings of England, interspersed by four Danish monarchs.

The Conquest (by William the Norman) thoroughly subjugated the Saxons; but, though deprived of all importance in the state, they still clung to the land, and, regardless of the confisca-

tion of their property, preferred even slavery to expatriation.* Their conquerors treated them with supreme scorn; and a century elapsed after the Norman Conquest before any Saxon was thought worthy to discharge the slightest public trust.

In England, however, the Saxons remained, constituting the numerical strength of the population. In spite of the unceasing efforts of William to extinguish all traces of their identity, the Saxon blood, and Saxon language, had in them too strong a vitality to be destroyed. Both kept a tenacious hold on the country; and, in the end, after grievous oppression, established themselves firmly as national characteristics, to which the descendants of the continental invaders were compelled to submit. Thus, England again, and for ever, became England; the Normans were absorbed into the general

* "The former kings of England did grant great privileges to the lords by whose assistance they had conquered the country, and kept the common people in obedience; but these, in conjunction with the bishops, growing too headstrong, proved very troublesome." (*Puffendorf, Introd. Hist. Europe,* sect. 25. p. 159. 8vo. edit.) The great distribution of land in England seems to have been made by William shortly after his conquest. "He reserved an ample revenue for the crown; and in the general distribution of land among his followers, he kept possession of no less than 1,422 manors in different parts of England." (*West's Inquiry into the Manner of Creating Peers,* p. 24.) The following also confirms the fact: — "Having, by the sword, rendered himself master of all the lands in the kingdom, he would certainly in the partition retain a great proportion for his own share." — *Hume's Hist. England,* book i. chap. iv.

mass, and Saxon manners and Saxon laws were once more predominant after a lapse of years.

"The conquest of England by the Duke of Normandy, is the last territorial conquest that has taken place in the western part of Europe. This invasion having occurred at a time less remote from our own than that of the Germanic populations which, in the fifth century, dismembered the Roman Empire, the documents which we possess relative to all the particulars of it are much more numerous, and indeed are sufficiently complete to furnish a just idea of what a conquest was in the middle ages — to show in what manner it was executed and maintained, what kind of spoliations and sufferings it imposed upon the conquered, and what were the moral and physical powers employed by the latter in re-acting against the invaders. Almost every nation of Europe has, in its present existence, something derived from the conquests of the middle ages. To those conquests most of them owe their geographical limits, the name which they bear, and, in a great measure, their internal constitution; that is, their distribution into orders and classes. The upper and lower classes, which were formerly struggling with each other and differing in their ideas of government, are, in several countries, no other than the conquering nations and the enslaved population of an earlier period. Thus, the sword of conquest, while changing the face of Europe, and the distribution

of its inhabitants into distinct nations, has left its original features in each nation created by the mixture of several races. The descendants of the invaders, when they had ceased to be a distinct people, remained a privileged class. They formed a warlike nobility, which, to prevent its own extinction, recruited its ranks from the ambitious, the adventurous, and the turbulent among the lower orders, and held dominion over the laborious and peaceable mass, until the termination of the military or feudal government resulting from the conquest. The invaded race, deprived of its property in the soil, of command, and of liberty—living not by arms, but by labour—dwelling not in castles, but in towns—formed another society, co-existent with the military society of the conquerors. It appears that, preserved within the walls of their towns, the people directed their attention to the rude arts of the times, and endeavoured to increase their small share of industry, and thereby commenced a sort of imperfect civilisation: that class has risen in proportion to the decay of the feudal organisation of the nobility sprung from the race of the ancient conquerors, by natural descent, or by political affiliation."*

The state of ignorance and barbarism in which the population was immersed in the days of the Heptarchy need scarcely be told; but the divisions

* See Thierry's History of the Conquest of England by the Normans.

into several kingdoms, or petty states, must have been most detrimental to any progress in improvement.

It is impossible to overlook the advantages accruing to the nation from the invasion of William of Normandy. The succession of Saxon monarchs had long been perplexed by party feuds; and public virtue was at a very low ebb. "The English," says Milton, in his "History of Britain continued to the Norman Conquest," (which, we may remark, has furnished, in its details and references to authorities, much of the knowledge displayed as original research by M. Thierry in the early part of his work on the Conquest of England),— "the English, while they agreed not about the choice of their native king, were constrained to take the yoke of an outlandish conqueror. With what minds, and by what course of life *they had fitted themselves for this servitude*, William of Malmesbury spares not to lay open. Not a few years before the Normans came, the clergy, though in Edward the Confessor's days, had lost all good literature and religion, scarce able to read and understand their Latin service. He was a miracle to others who knew his grammar. The monks went clad in fine stuffs, and made no difference what they ate; which, though in itself no fault, yet to *their consciences* was irreligious. The great men, given to gluttony and dissolute life, made a prey of the common people, abusing their daugh-

ters whom they had in service, then turning them off to the stews: the meaner sort, tippling together night and day, spent all they had in drunkenness, attended with other vices, which effeminate men's minds. Whence it came to pass that, carried on with fury and rashness more than any true fortitude or skill of war, they gave to William, their conqueror, so easy a conquest. Not but that some few of all sorts were much better among them; but such was the generality. And as the long-suffering of God permits bad men to enjoy prosperous days with the good, so his severity oft-times exempts not good men from their share in evil times with the bad."

This passage is important as showing, that where no moral virtue, strengthened by sincere religion, exists, a community can hardly fail to be divided against itself, and, therefore, liable to degradation and conquest. Had the people not been thus depraved, they might more effectually have supported Harold, who was the king of their choice. The piety of his predecessor, Edward the Confessor, had failed as an example to the nation; and though the son of Godwin and his army, who fought bravely against the Normans, were defeated, the efforts of the people, after the battle of Hastings, when opportunities still remained of expelling the invaders, were all impotent. The sinews of war (wealth, and public virtue, such as they then existed) had been exhausted.

Out of apparent evil, however, good often arises. What we *gained* by our *loss* in this conquest, may be observed in many particulars. First, England grew much greater, both in dominion and power abroad, and also in dignity and state at home, by the accession of so much territory upon the continent. For though the Normans by the Conquest gained much of the English lands and riches, yet England gained Normandy, which by it became a province to this crown. Next, it gained greater strength by the great number of Normans and French that came over with the Conqueror, and after his establishment here, and incorporated with the English nation, joining with them in the same language, laws, and interests. Then we gained much by the great increase of our naval power and of ships wherein Normandy then abounded. This, with the perpetual intercourse between England and Normandy, and other parts of the continent, gave us some trifling trade and commerce, and thereby treasure to the crown and kingdom; which appeared first in the great mass left by the Conqueror to Prince Henry, his younger son. England, by the Conquest, gained likewise a natural right to the dominion of the narrow seas, which had been before acquired only by Edgar and other Saxon kings. But the dominion of narrow seas seems naturally to belong, like that of rivers, to those who possess the banks or coasts on both sides: the

former title was, therefore, strengthened by so long a coast as that of Normandy on one side, and of England on the other side of the channel. Besides, by this conquest, we gained more learning, more civilisation, more refinement of language, customs, and manners, from the great resort of other strangers, as well as mixture of French and Normans. And, lastly, we gained all our consideration abroad by carrying our arms so often and so gloriously, as well as extending our dominions into foreign countries; so that, whereas our Saxon kings were little known abroad farther than by the fame of their devotion and piety, or their journeys, gifts, and oblations made to Rome, after the Conquest the crown of England grew first to be feared by our neighbours; to have constant intercourse with foreign princes; to take part, and be considered in all the affairs of Christendom; and, by the subsequent accessions of Anjou and Guienne, came in a short time to be esteemed, without controversy, (while possessed of those dominions) the greatest power of any kingdom then in Christendom, as appears by so many glorious adventures and successes of English arms in France, Spain, Brittany, Flanders, Sicily, and the Holy Land.*

It is a popular error, as all inquirers know, to characterise the Norman conquest as a French conquest. The Normans were not French; but a

* See Sir William Temple's "Introduction to the History of England."

colony settled in that part of France which, as the colonists were North people, originating in Scandinavia, was called by them Normandy, having previously been designated Neustria. In fact, the Normans were cognate in their derivation to the Anglo-Saxons, and, under Rollo, a piratical Dane, over-ran a portion of France, and forced the French monarch, Charles the Third, to cede Neustria to them. This took place only one hundred and fifty years previous to the invasion of England by William; so that when the Normans came here they were not without some affinity to the Saxons whom they attacked. The people, however, for a long period after the Conquest, were very impatient under the foreign yoke. The English people particularly hated the name of conquest, and resented the change of forms and language in their laws, and the introduction of new customs; but especially the rigour of the forest laws, which they felt to be arbitrary, and not only a restraint of their liberties, but an indignity to themselves.* The inferior class groaned under more substantial oppression. The system of vassalage, of fines and escheats to the feudal lord, and all the lumber of Norman feudal law, was a system of slavery (as Blackstone observes) so varied, complicated, and severe, that one cannot withhold pity for the people by whom it was endured.

* Sir William Temple.

"The success of the Norman invasion, which was crowned by the victory at Hastings, produced a conquest, the progress, the consolidation, and the immediate results of which form several distinct periods.

"The first period is that of the territorial invasion. It begins with the victory of Hastings, on the 14th of October, in the year 1066; it embraces the successive advances of the conquerors from east to west, and from south to north, and ends in the year 1070, when all the centres of resistance had been destroyed—when all the powerful men had submitted, or fled from the country. The second period, that of the political invasion, begins where the former terminates: it comprises the series of efforts made by the conquerors to disorganise, and (if we may so express it) to *denationalise* the conquered population: it terminates in 1076, by the execution of the last chief of Saxon race, and the sentence of degradation passed upon the last bishop of that race. In the third period, the Conqueror laboured to subject to a regular order the violent results of the Conquest, and to convert into legal if not legitimate property, that which had been taken possession of by his soldiers. This period terminated in 1086, by a grand review of all the conquerors possessing lands, who, renewing their oath of liege-homage to the king, appeared for the first time as a settled nation, and no longer as an army in the field. The fourth is filled with the intestine

dissensions of the conquering nation, and its civil wars, either for the possession of the conquered territory, or for the right of dominion over it. This period, longer than all the preceding, is closed in 1152, by the extinction of all the pretenders to the throne of England, excepting one only—Henry, son of Geoffroy, Count of Anjou, and the Empress Matilda, niece to William the Conqueror. And in the fifth period, the Normans of England and of the Continent, having no more internal quarrels to consume their strength and activity, set out from their two centres of action to conquer and colonise abroad, or extend their supremacy without changing their seat of empire. Henry II., and his successor Richard I., are the representatives of this period, which is full of continental wars and fresh territorial or political conquests. It terminated in the early part of the thirteenth century, with a reaction against the Anglo-Norman.

"Corresponding to these different periods, there are successive changes in the destiny of the Anglo-Saxon nation: first, it loses its property in the soil; next, its former political and religious organisation; then, favoured by the dissensions among its masters, and attaching itself to the party of the kings against the rebelling vassals, it obtains concessions which give it a transitory hope of recovering its national existence, or again endeavours, though fruitlessly, to free itself by force. Its revolts, having become extremely rare, are spoken of by

contemporary writers merely as quarrels between the poor and the rich; and it is the history of a commotion of this kind, which happened in London in the year 1196, and was conducted by a person evidently of Saxon birth, which terminates the detailed account of the facts relating to the Conquest."*

"In the distribution of lands taken from the English, the King had taken care to charge them with the maintenance of his troops. The new proprietors were very willing to accept of the estates upon that condition, since, having no right, they were wholly indebted to his liberality for them. By this means he maintained, without any manner of charge to himself, threescore thousand men, ready to march upon the first notice. It is not at all strange he passed for the richest prince in his time, since his income vastly exceeded the expense of his household, in which he spent but a small part of the yearly profits of the whole kingdom. After the King had thus settled his revenues, he sought means to gratify another passion, which was almost as strong as the former: I mean his fondness for hunting, which caused him to commit a world of unjust acts. By these acts I do not understand those severe laws he made on that account, though they were exceedingly rigorous, (for instance, he enacted that whoever killed a deer should have his eyes put out): this does not properly distinguish

* Thierry.

him from many other princes who look upon a breach of the game-laws as a capital offence, and more readily pardon the killing a man than a stag. What I speak of is, the prodigious desolation King William ordered to be made in Hampshire, by dispeopling the country for above thirty miles in compass, demolishing the churches and houses, to make a forest for the habitation of wild beasts. If we may believe certain historians, he did not make the owners of the lands or houses the least amends. This tract of land, called before *Ytene*, was afterwards termed the *New Forest*."*

This statement of the voluminous historian must be taken with some qualification. Still, however, it appears that the entire community, about this period, consisted of an upper class, and of a very extensive lower class in the most abject state of ignorance and destitution; the former being the conquerors, the latter the conquered part of the population. No other means of improvement were left to this class than the information conveyed by the priests; and certainly, bad as its situation might be, it was better in every respect (as part of the country was formed into parishes) than during the Heptarchy or at any preceding period.

It may be thought that the inferior barons, among whom William the Conqueror distributed the land, and some of the Saxon population per-

* Rapin, vol. i. p. 177.

mitted by him to retain their property, could have formed a kind of middle class; but it does not appear that sufficient numbers then existed to deserve that name.

Though Sir William Temple and other writers seem anxious to exalt the character of William the Conqueror, and to demonstrate the advantages derived by the English during his reign, their own admissions prove not only the utter slavery of the whole nation, but the unjust, tyrannical, and even perfidious disposition of the monarch. After the siege of York in 1069, William ravaged the country in so terrible a manner, as not to leave a single house standing for sixty miles between York and Durham. Even the churches were not spared. Nothing could exceed the misery and desolation of the northern counties. The lands lay untilled for nine years, occasioning a dreadful famine, during which the people died in heaps, "having," say the chroniclers, "endeavoured to prolong a wretched life by eating of the most unclean animals, and sometimes even human flesh."

It was natural, on every account, that the English people should not be easily reconciled to a king forced upon them by conquest, and who enriched himself and rewarded his Norman followers by plundering the natives. Feeling insecure in his possession of the crown, he resolved to humble every individual who had the least influence over the people, and thus render them unable to resist

his tyranny. Many persons, innocent of the slightest desire to injure the Conqueror, suffered in the execution of this design. "But," says Rapin, "at that time it is certain the King thought only of his own safety, without troubling himself whether the means he made use of were consistent with justice. To accomplish his ends, he suddenly removed the English from such posts as gave them any power over their countrymen. After which, he dispossessed them of all the baronies and fiefs of the crown in general, and distributed them to the Normans and other foreigners who had followed him into England. But as these last were not so many as those who were deprived of their estates, he was obliged to *load* them with benefits, in order to draw all wealth out of English hands."

It is hardly possible that the injustice of tyranny could go farther than this; nor, had there been any approach to civilisation among the people, would they have submitted to such grievous aggressions. In any community in which public opinion can make itself heard, no despot would venture even to contemplate such perpetrations.

The English clergy, no less than the English nobility, suffered by the Conqueror's avarice and despotism. Their ecclesiastical privileges were violated; troops were quartered upon the monasteries; the religious houses were searched and plundered not only of money and plate, but even of the shrines of saints, and of consecrated vessels. Not satisfied

with this, William deposed many English bishops and abbots, banished some from the kingdom, and imprisoned others "without any legal proceedings, or giving any other reason than his good pleasure. After he was thus clear of all that caused him any uneasiness, he placed in their room Normans or other foreigners, for all were acceptable but the English."*

It is quite clear that William's design was to deprive the English people of any political existence. They were to be the mere bondsmen of the Normans, for whom they were to labour, and to whose insults and impositions they were slavishly to submit. If they dared not openly resist their oppressors, enough of their ancient spirit was still left to prompt murmurings and expressions of discontent. Some of the principal men of the conquered nation thought a favourable time had arrived for a vigorous effort to redeem themselves. Accordingly a conspiracy was formed to drive the King and the Normans out of the kingdom; and the scheme was promoted with so much caution and secrecy, that William was suddenly menaced by a numerous body of armed conspirators. The malcontents grew, day by day, more numerous, and proclaimed Edgar Atheling as king. In this danger, the Conqueror found it his interest to use fair words, and large promises; and invited the leaders of the revolt to an amicable conference at Berkhamstead, where, like his descendant, John,

* Rapin.

under similar circumstances, he solemnly swore upon the Holy Evangelists, and the relics of the church of St. Alban's, "that he would observe the good, approved, and ancient laws of the kingdom, which the holy and pious kings, his predecessors, and chiefly King Edward, had ordained."

Having confidence in the royal oath, the English broke up their martial array, and returned to their homes. This was all that William wanted; and within a few days afterwards he privately and suddenly endeavoured to ruin, one by one, those whom, united, he could not destroy. He put some to death, dispossessed others, and outlawed many more, utterly regardless of his oath.

The above is mentioned merely to show in what an uncivilised state a people must be, to become so easy a prey to crafty designs.

Soon after the Conquest, and during the reign of William Rufus, the first Crusade took place. This tended to increase the power of the great chiefs, and to diminish that of the lesser, who, anxious to prepare themselves and their followers for the expedition to the Holy Land, were forced either to sell or mortgage their lands to the more powerful chiefs or to the church. They were thus rendered dependent on the wealthy barons, and forced to attach themselves as followers to some leading person.

It would be foreign to our subject to give any particular account of this war, or of those which succeeded it under the same name; nor need we

describe the fanaticism by which an impulse to the Crusades was given. The mighty torrent of human beings that poured from the north and west to the south, although it occasioned indescribable misery to both the assailants and assailed, yet gratified the warlike spirit and love of enterprise common in those days. The several crusades do not appear to have been any check on civilisation, but the reverse. For many years after the Conquest the following was the state of England:—A monarch who desired to be absolute, a very powerful and warlike class of feudal chiefs, and an ignorant lower class, consisting of serfs, villains, bondsmen, and other dependents.*

How was it possible for a nation so situated to be in possession of any of the requisites for civilisation? It had no commerce, no manufactures, no industry of any kind, beyond that absolutely required to procure the necessaries of life by the rude cultivation of the soil. In those days a middle class was not found in towns of sufficient

* After the conquest of England, there was in fact only an upper and a lower class. King William gave to Hugh de Arincis, his sister's son, the whole county of Chester, which he erected into a palatinate. (Cund. in Ches.) Robert, Earl of Montaigne, had 973 manors and lordships; Allan of Britany and Richmond, 442; Odo, Bishop of Baieux, 439 (Brady's Hist., p. 198—200.); Geoffry, Bishop of Coutance, 280 (Order. Vital.), and so on. It was computed that in the large county of Norfolk there were not in the Conqueror's time more than sixty-six proprietors of land.—Sir Henry Spelman, Gloss.

wealth, numbers, or information, to desire or to deserve those charters and privileges for which, at a future period, they became so eager, and which they obtained, when subsequent monarchs thought it their policy to cultivate a good understanding with citizens.

For a series of years following the invasion and conquest of Britain by William of Normandy, nothing resembling even an approach to civilisation, or an appearance of the elements required for its formation, can be discovered. The monarchs were intent on their own aggrandisement, and on curbing the barons. The barons, on their part, were equally anxious to preserve their independence, maintain their influence, and control the sovereign. The middle class were of no moment, either in numbers or influence; and the lower class, the rude cultivators of the soil, were either serfs or villains, or persons in the poorest condition, forming a population very inferior both in manners and information to that existing at the time in France, in Italy, and on the European shores of the Mediterranean. The continent of Europe was scarcely emerging from a state of barbarism, and Christianity, except in name, had as yet made but little progress. The mass of the people were either superstitious, or influenced by bigotry; but a small portion of pure religious sentiment existed. The several governments of Europe were in a very unsettled state, and although the power of William the Conqueror and his succes-

sors over the mass of the conquered population was such as to employ them in raising those magnificent edifices now the pride of our chief cities, yet it must not be concluded that the elements of civilisation had germinated in the community. Like the vast structures we have mentioned in Egypt and Rome, they evinced the absolute power of the monarch, not the civilisation of the people.

CHAPTER II.

THE CHARTER.

Magna Charta of little Service at the Time it was granted. — Useful in Theory but not in Practice. — Immorality of the Feudal Barons. — Degraded and ignorant Lower Class. — No Constitutional Form of Government in existence.

One of the most conspicuous events in the early part of the History of England, subsequent to the Norman Conquest, was the grant by King John of *Magna Charta Communium Libertatum* (the Great Charter of Common Liberties). It is well known that he conceded this not from any sense of justice in his own bosom: it was extorted by his fear of the barons, who made a formidable hostile demonstration. These men, though of Norman descent, "had, by degrees," says Rapin, "put on the English genius, were wholly addicted to liberty, and wished to have the Saxon laws re-established;" — more probably from selfish views than desire to benefit the community, though it might seem politic, in their stipulations, to affect a regard for the latter. "Accordingly they demanded, in plain and express terms, a return to the obsolete laws of Edward the Confessor, with the other rights and privileges contained in the disregarded charter of Henry I., which

had been vainly confirmed by his grandson Henry II.* They alleged, moreover, that they required only what John himself had promised with a solemn oath, before he received his absolution."† This oath was taken at the Chapter-house at Winchester, when, anxious for a reversal of the excommunication under which he laboured, John swore, "That he would, to the utmost of his power, love, defend, and maintain the holy Church; that he would re-establish the good laws of his ancestors, especially those of King Edward (the Saxon), and destroy such as were wicked; that he would judge all his subjects according to the just judgment of his court, and restore to every man his right."

Being thus reminded of an old and solemn promise, and menaced by the military array of barons

* "A charter granted in 1100, by Henry I., confirming divers privileges enjoyed under the Saxon kings, and renouncing all those unjust prerogatives usurped by the two late kings. The charter included a very material article, no less satisfactory to the Normans than to the English, which was, the confirmation of the laws of King Edward (the Confessor), that is, of the laws in force during the empire of the Saxon kings, and entirely laid aside or expressly abolished since the Conquest. The native English could not but be extremely well pleased to see their ancient laws restored; and the Normans were no less gainers by it. Hitherto they held their estates at the will of the Conqueror, and consequently were liable to be dispossessed at his pleasure. But by this charter of Henry I., which confined the royal authority within its ancient bounds, they were settled in their possessions, and screened from the violence of arbitrary power." — *Rapin*, vol. i. p. 191.

† Ibid. vol. i. p. 275.

at Runnymede (the place of meeting), John signed Magna Charta, containing several covenants in favour of the interests of the nobility and clergy, and of a portion of the inferior community. The lower classes in England were at this time mere serfs and bondsmen, living in the slavery of feudal tenure. The rise of towns, however, contributed to the abatement of villainage. "It was a privilege," says a recent author, "early granted to burghs in England, that any slave taking refuge in one of them, and residing there for a year and a day, became thereupon free. These free towns or burghs accordingly were, at the time when Magna Charta was granted, the only places in the kingdom where any considerable number of the commonalty was to be found not in a state of bondage. To the clauses of the charter, therefore, which refer to the towns, we are principally to look for the degree in which it established or extended popular freedom. Certainly none of the parties concerned in the transaction entertained any idea of a general emancipation of the villains. Those composing this part of the population were universally considered as mere goods or chattels, and, as such, not comprehended in the community at all. By one of the articles, indeed, of this very charter of the common liberties, the labourers by whom the land was cultivated are classed along with the cattle and instruments of husbandry; the guardian of an heir who is a minor, it is declared, shall manage his estate without de-

struction and waste either of *the men* or goods.* It is undeniable, therefore, that Magna Charta neither abolished slavery in England, nor contained any provision tending in that direction; and it may therefore in one sense be asserted to have left the great body of the people in the same condition in which it found them. But in regard to the free population, the case was otherwise. One of the clauses assures to all cities, burghs, towns, and ports, the enjoyment of their liberties and free customs both by land and water, for which, till now, they had been all regularly in the practice of paying a yearly tax or bribe to the crown. A considerable part of the royal revenue was derived from this source. Other articles promulgated various enactments, decidedly favourable to the interests of commerce."

But shortly after signing this document, John repented of his deed, and strove hard to nullify it. An old chronicler declares, that the King intended not to bind himself with chains of parchment. Certain persons about him, feeling that this charter, and another granted at the same time respecting the liberties of the forest, must be prejudicial to them, never ceased representing to him the injury he had done himself in signing them. In short, all their

* "The warden of the land of such heir, who shall be under age, shall take of the land of such heir only reasonable issues, reasonable customs, and reasonable services; and that without *destruction and waste of the men or things.*" — Magna Charta, Art. v.

discourses tended only to put him upon measures to free himself from the subjection to which his concessions had rendered him liable. They very easily succeeded in their design; but the greatest difficulty lay in the execution.*

The slight attention paid to the most solemn oaths, or rather the total disregard and contempt with which they were treated, evinces the state of moral principle and deficiency of religious sentiment in those days, and proves how little the elements of civilisation had extended themselves. We see the sovereign and persons of the highest character in the nation breaking their solemn oaths, as soon nearly as they were made, without the slightest hesitation or compunction. What must have been the moral state of the people at large under such a system!

The demand for the charter is evidence of a desire for an equal administration of the laws (such as then existed) by the well-informed men of that time, and evinces also the apprehensions entertained of King John's cruel, unprincipled, and perfidious disposition. Scarcely any practical advantage, however, appears to have been secured to the nation at large by the concessions to the barons. A boon, such as Magna Charta unquestionably was, in that day, could be of little service to a population nearly barbarous, with an uneducated and warlike upper class of feudal barons, and an extensive and

* Rapin, vol. i. p. 276.

degraded lower class of serfs; for the traders living in towns, from whom hereafter a middle class was principally to spring, had not yet risen into any importance.

As a precedent in favour of liberty, and as an index to future generations, Magna Charta was invaluable; but it was a nullity at the time. The monarch from whom it was extorted and his immediate successors on the throne, and the barons by whom it was obtained and their descendants, did not regard it, or alter their conduct to each other, or towards the unfortunate population under their control.

In writing an inscription for a column at Runnymede, Akenside has considered rather the remote, than the immediate, effects of Magna Charta.

> "Thou, who the verdant plain dost traverse here,
> While Thames among his willows from thy view
> Retires; O stranger, stay thee, and the scene
> Around contemplate well. This is the place
> Where England's ancient barons, clad in arms
> And stern with conquest, from their tyrant king
> (Then render'd tame) did challenge and secure
> The charter of thy freedom. Pass not on,
> Till thou hast bless'd their memory, and paid
> Those thanks, which God appointed the reward
> Of public virtue. And if chance thy home
> Salute thee with a father's honour'd name,
> Go, call thy sons; instruct them what a debt
> They owe their ancestors; and make them swear
> To pay it, by transmitting down entire
> Those sacred rights to which themselves were born."

Yes; the "sacred rights" were enjoyed by pos-

terity, not by the people who lived when they were granted. The elements of civilisation had not as yet spread over the community. To exemplify our view of the subject, let us imagine that the Habeas Corpus, and afterwards the Bill of Rights, and other bulwarks of liberty, as enacted in 1688, or at subsequent periods, had emanated in 1215 from King John; no reasonable person will suppose that more liberty would have been enjoyed by the people, or that a constitutional form of government could have been permanently established. A few virtuous, well-intentioned, and well-informed men might be found, probably, in that day inclined to favour liberty, and to support free institutions; but they could meet with little or no support from the people. In the absence of information, and of a middle class, it is evident that the materials for a constitution would be deficient, and that the power of the sovereign, and of the feudal barons, assisted by the influence of the Roman church, must have been too great to allow of the fair and free administration of the law to individuals, or to afford security of persons and property to those on whom the ruling powers looked with feelings of hostility.*

* *Evidence of the power of the Feudal Barons.* — "Fawkes de Breauté (A.D. 1216), one of the barons, set at nought all law and justice. When thirty-five verdicts were at one time found against him, on account of his violent expulsion of so many freeholders from their possessions, he came to the court of justice with an armed force, seized the judge who had pronounced the verdicts, and imprisoned him in Bedford Castle. He then levied

Innumerable instances might be adduced to prove that such was the case. The year after Magna Charta was granted, the declaration made by the Bishop of Winchester, minister to Henry III., was, that the barons of England must not pretend to assume the same liberties and privileges as those of France, as the monarch in the former country had a more absolute power than in the latter.* Henry III. himself, at a subsequent period, speaking of the Great Charter granted by John, said, "Why should I observe this charter, which is neglected by all, both prelates and nobility?"

Within half a century after the meeting of the barons at Runnymede, an assembly of nobles, prelates, abbots, and commoners was summoned at Oxford to consider the state of the nation, and to select competent persons to investigate the abuses which had arisen in the state under Henry III. The Earl of Leicester, brother-in-law of the King, and who had been in open hostility with him, appeared as head of the malcontents. As in the instance of John, concessions were extorted from Henry; but though

open war against the King." — *Rymer*, vol. i. p. 198.; also *M. Paris*, pp. 221. 224.

* *Of the King's power.* — "The justiciary made inquiry into the disorder (A.D. 1216), and finding one Constantine Fitz-Arnulf to have been the ringleader, an insolent man, who justified his crime in Hubert's presence, he ordered him immediately to be hanged without trial or form of process. He also cut off the feet of some of Constantine's accomplices." — *M. Paris*, pp. 217. 218.; also *Chron. Duns.*, vol. i. p. 129.

little real service accrued to the people, yet subsequently this meeting was of infinite benefit, as establishing a precedent for constitutional assemblies, by which popular rights might be upheld, and popular grievances redressed. Not that the convocation assimilated to the idea at present conveyed by the word "Parliament." The entire control was assumed by the barons and high ecclesiastics: the commons were not expected to take part in the deliberations; but were directed merely to give an account of the state of their shires, and of the grievances under which they might labour.*

At this period there seems to have been no fair administration of the law; violence and lawless power carried all before them, and even the authority of the sovereign was little respected by the turbulent baronial chiefs.

The barons, prelates, and abbots did not represent any interest but their own; they took no account of the people, who, in those days, had little or no property. The former attended on their own behalf to preserve their feudal rights, and to guard against encroachments of the crown; the ecclesiastics were present on behalf of their order and of

* "They, the barons, ordered four knights should be chosen by each county; that they should make inquiry into the grievances of which their neighbourhood had reason to complain, and should attend the ensuing parliament, in order to give information to that assembly of the state of their particular counties."—*M. Paris*, p. 557.

the church; there was no middle class. The lower class belonged, in fact, to the barons and the church. It was after this period that a middle class was formed in towns, and that persons associated together for manufactures, or commerce, or for improving their condition in any other manner.

In these days no anxiety was manifested by the sovereigns to promote the welfare of the people. They undertook to wage war, not to ensure any political benefit, but either to find employment for the restless and savage spirit of the barons, or to gratify some imaginary pique or wounded vanity, or to be enabled to increase their military force, or as a pretext for applying to the clergy and to the barons for subsidies which otherwise could not be obtained. "In 1270, under Henry III., the laws were not executed; the barons oppressed the common people with impunity; they gave shelter to bands of robbers, whom they employed in committing ravages." * The useless and buccaneering exploits, commencing at this period, and concluding with Henry the Eighth's attack on Boulogne in 1554, sufficiently attest the barbarism of those days, the profligacy of the sovereigns, the turbulent and warlike spirit of the nobles, and the utterly powerless state of the people, on whom the chief burden of the wars was imposed. To imagine there was any sort of similitude to a constitutional form of govern-

* Chron. Dunst., vol. i. p. 404.

ment, or any of the requisites for civilisation spread among the community, would be a delusion.

Many of our historians (Hume in particular), when they commemorate the events of bygone days, commit a grievous error in confounding the sentiments of the barons and of the upper clergy with those of the nation at large. These two orders had certainly, in early times, much of the power, and nearly all the landed property, of the country. The former were ignorant, haughty, and tyrannical; the latter probably possessed all the learning of their age; but they were biassed by their attachment to, and lived under the influence of, the Church of Rome. The united voice of the barons and clergy could not therefore be responded to by the people, and was unlike in its influence to public opinion as we have defined it. Civilisation was not sufficiently extended at the time to create that sentiment.

Hume, who is not disinclined to support arbitrary power, but is usually correct in his statement of historical facts, says, in reference to the time of Edward III., — "They mistake, indeed, much the genius of this reign who imagine it was not extremely arbitrary. All the high prerogatives of the crown were to the full exerted in it: such as the dispensing power, the extension of the forests, erecting monopolies, exacting loans, stopping justice by particular warrants, levying arbitrary and exorbitant fines, extending the authority of the privy council and the star chamber to the decision of pri-

vate causes, and innumerable other acts of oppression. No abuse of arbitrary power was more frequently exercised than imposing taxes." Cotton's Abridgment of the Records gives similar instances of this kind in the first and subsequent years of Edward the Third's reign. Such, indeed, was the low state of civilisation in those early days. Little or no improvement took place in the subsequent reigns of the Tudor race, when arbitrary domination in the sovereign was augmented. The influence of the barons lay dormant in the reign of Edward the Third*; it rose again subsequently, and existed until the wars of the Roses, when the power of the barons, by the contests that took place in these civil wars, was much diminished by their destruction of each other. At the conclusion of these wars, by the prudence, discretion, and economy of Henry VII., the baronial influence was nearly annihilated, and the sway of the monarch strengthened in proportion; so that both Henry VII. and his successors of the Tudor race could be ranked among the most despotic monarchs in Europe. This power was handed down by them to the Stuarts, and continued until the Rebellion and consequent civil war.

* "In so much better a condition were the privileges of the people, even in the arbitrary reign of Edward III., than during some subsequent reigns, particularly those of the Tudors, when no tyranny or abuse of power ever met with any check or opposition, or so much as a remonstrance." — *Hume*, 8vo edit., vol. ii. p. 492.

There seems little necessity to dwell much on this period of our history: it would be of trifling service to the subject of our inquiry. The state of society in England appears to have ameliorated by a slow and imperceptible rise, and an equally slow and gradual increase in the elements of civilisation from these days to the Reformation, which was indeed a step of the greatest importance to the subject of our investigation.

CHAPTER III.

WARS OF THE ROSES.

The Factions of York and Lancaster. — Great Part of the English Barons perished in these Wars. — Policy of Henry VII. — Legal Sanction given to the Feudal Chiefs to alienate their Lands. — Great Advantage to the Cause of Civilisation. — Absolute Power of the Monarchs of England.

THE civil discords that took place in England, between the rival factions of York and Lancaster, denominated the wars of the Roses, by which much individual suffering was experienced by the people, and which nearly exterminated the baronial nobility of the Conquest, are styled by Milton the poet a "war fit for Cain to be the leader of — an abhorred, a cursed, a fraternal war."

The wars of the Roses were not the contests of the people. They had their origin in a family dispute touching the succession to the throne, thus encouraging the ambition of two rival factions of barons. The chieftains were accordingly able to gratify their martial ardour, and to live with their followers at free quarters on their opponents. These civil wars were so far of service, that they accelerated the downfall of the feudal power of the barons,

and, by establishing the supreme authority of the sovereign, facilitated the national amelioration. It cannot be supposed we mean to assert that absolute power is, in itself, to be commended; but that, in an unhealthy state of a nation, it is generally one of the means by which improvement is effected.

How few rights the common people enjoyed, appears from the insurrection of Wat Tyler in Richard the Second's reign, when he and his followers contended merely for enfranchisement from slavery of themselves and descendants. The King, alarmed at the numerical force of the rioters, which amounted to above a hundred thousand men, quieted the people by the grant of a charter, and, tranquillity being restored, revoked his grant in Parliament, leaving the population again in slavery.

Daniel, the historian and poet, who lived in the reigns of Elizabeth and James, and who to his valuable histories in prose has added a metrical record of the civil wars of York and Lancaster, calls the battle at Towton, in Yorkshire, between Henry VI. and Edward, "our great Pharsalian day, the greatest day of ruin that dissension ever brought into this kingdom." In this fierce engagement, no less than a hundred thousand Englishmen madly fought against each other for an issue in which they were not concerned. Our old poet, in decided language (most remarkable in a court writer during the reign of James I.), thus charac-

terises the besotted folly of the people in the memorable conflict at Towton:—

"What rage, what madness, England, do we see,
That this brave people, in such multitude,
Run to confound themselves? And all to be,
Thus mad for *lords*, and for mere servitude!
What might have been, if (Roman-like and free)
These gallant spirits had nobler ends pursued,
And strain'd to points of glory and renown,
For good of the republic, and their own?

"But here no Cato with a senate stood
For commonwealth; nor here were any who sought
To emancipate the state for public good,
But only headstrong for their faction wrought.
Here every man runs on to spend his blood,
To get but what he had already got;
For whether Pompey or a Cæsar won,
Their state was ever sure to be all one."*

Had there been at this time any middle class sufficiently numerous and informed to give a tone to public opinion, could a civil war, such as the above, have been tolerated?

Henry VII. was an able and a politic prince. Like his brother sovereigns in France, Spain, and Germany, he was jealous of the power of the barons. It was impossible for him and his advisers not to perceive the danger to the regal prerogative from their turbulent disposition, great political influence, and the number of their dependents.

He had sufficient sagacity to perceive the mi-

* History of the Civil War, by Samuel Daniel, book viii. stanzas 6, 7.

serable condition of the population, and imagined that, by increasing the power of the crown, he not only fulfilled his duty to the country, but added to his own influence and riches. When a prudent and able, and even a virtuous man, imagines he can promote the welfare of others, and gratify also his own ambition, it requires a very strong barrier of morality to prevent his best exertions from being used in the attempt, without much scruple as to the means.

Although the civil wars had for a time curbed the barons,—although the most factious and tumultuous of their body had perished, it was apparent that the successors of these barons, when in possession of the estates of their predecessors, would, with their inheritance, probably inherit also their turbulent and ambitious disposition,—that discontents among them would in process of time take place, leading to a renewal of factions, if not to future civil wars. To counteract this tendency, to secure himself and his descendants with ample prerogative on the throne, and also to achieve the popular results, already mentioned, by lessening the baronial influence, he resolved to have the law of perpetual settlements modified. To effect this, however, was no easy matter. Although the feudal chiefs were desirous to obtain all the luxuries, such as they were, produced by the citizens, and were therefore not disinclined to obtain the command of money, yet, as a body, they always felt great disinclination

to permit a change in the laws of entail. If, therefore, the monarch had at once proposed a legislative enactment to alter the law of entail, his motives might have been suspected: the barons, and their followers and adherents, were too powerful not to place an effective barrier to such an attempt, if openly made in the face of day.

It was necessary for the policy of the crafty monarch to adopt some indirect mode of lessening the enormous influence of the great baronial chiefs, and for this purpose to have recourse to the courts of law. The judges readily lent their powerful assistance, and by their connivance and sanction the fiction of levying fines and suffering recoveries was adopted, which to a certain extent, in an indirect manner, superseded the law of entail.* The proprietors of estates thereby found themselves relieved by facilities which enabled them to convert into money their landed possessions; and many amongst them alienated their property, in whole or in part. By degrees, the immense tracts of land belonging to individuals were divided, and purchased by many. Thus the enormous possessions of the barons were lessened; a process which, together with the creation of wealth in towns, gradually gave birth to a middle class.†

* "Henry the Seventh's great object was to lessen the power of the barons and to raise up the lawyers." — *Hume*, 8vo, vol. ii.

† "This was evidently agreeable to the intention of Henry VII., whose policy was to lay the road as open as possible to the

It must be understood, that although this cause began to take effect in the reign of Henry VII., yet the operation was so slow, that nearly two centuries elapsed before any appearance of the power of the middle class manifested itself.

"Henry the Seventh," says an historian*, "brought peace, union, and tranquillity, to a nation divided, distracted, and besmeared with blood. Having obtained the crown, he politicly took care to put gradual stops to the power of the nobility, who had lately raised such storms in the nation, which he performed by procuring three several laws: by one of which the barons' lands were made alienable, which would cause them insensibly to divide and break in pieces: by another, he encouraged husbandry, ascertaining portions of land for tillage; by which the country farmers, living more plentifully, would not so readily be seduced by their lords to disturb the public peace; by a third, retainers were lopped off; so that the nobility were stripped of their mighty retinues, and could not easily compose a cavalry, which was usually made up of their followers: by all of which the balance of the nation was gradually altered, and the Com-

alienation of landed property, in order to weaken the overgrown power of his nobles. But as they, from opposite reasons, were not easily brought to consent to such a provision, it was therefore couched in his act under covert and obscure expressions." —*Blackstone's Com.*, book ii.

* Echard, p. 258.

mons obtained a greater power and figure than they ever had before." *

The conduct of Henry VII. to one of his principal servants, by whom he had been sumptuously entertained, is thus narrated. † "At the King's going away, the servants stood (in a seemly manner) in their livery coats, with cognizances, ranged on both sides, and made the King a lane. The King called his host unto him, and said, 'My Lord, I have heard much of your hospitality, but I see it is greater than the speech. These handsome gentlemen and yeomen that I see on both sides of me, are sure your menial servants.' The Earl smiled and said, 'They are most of them my retainers that are come to do me service *at such a time as this*, and chiefly to see your Grace.' The King started a little, and said, 'By my faith, my Lord, I thank you for my good cheer, but I may not endure to have my laws broken in my sight. My attorney must speak with you.'" The fine imposed was no less than fifteen thousand marks. This anecdote, though trivial in itself, shows the King's apprehen-

* We may fairly conclude that the numerous armies in these days mentioned by historians, consisted chiefly of ragamuffins who followed the camp, and lived by plunder."—*Bady Hist.*, vol. ii. p. 92.

"One successful campaign, by pay and plunder, and the ransom of prisoners, was supposed to be a small fortune for men who lived idle all the rest of the year, and commonly all their lives after."—*Ibid.*

† Lord Verulam's Life of Henry VII.

sion of retainers, and the increasing power of the crown and of the laws over the barons.

"The barons, thus controlled by the King, instead of vieing with each other in the number and boldness of their retainers, began to acquire by degrees a more civilised species of emulation, and endeavoured to excel in the splendour and elegance of their equipages, houses, and tables. The common people, no longer maintained in vicious idleness by their superiors, were obliged to learn some calling or industry, and became useful to themselves or others; and it must be acknowledged, that as much as an industrious tradesman is a better man and a better citizen than one of those idle retainers, who formerly depended on the great families, so much is the life of a modern man of fortune more laudable than that of an ancient chief or baron of former times."

It cannot however be denied, that at this period (the 15th century), the condition of trade and manufactures, and the state of commerce of the people of England, were inferior to that of most communities in the southern portion of Europe.

"The great revolutions that have happened in manners and property have paved the way by imperceptible but sure degrees for as great a revolution in government: yet while that revolution was effecting, the crown became more arbitrary than ever, by the progress of those very means that afterwards reduced its power. It is obvious to every observer, that, until the close of the Lancastrian

civil wars, the property and the power of the nation were chiefly divided between the king, the nobility, and the clergy. The commons were generally in a state of great ignorance; their personal wealth, before the extension of trade, was comparatively small, and the nature of their landed property was such as kept them in continual dependence upon their feudal lord, being usually some powerful baron, some opulent abbey, or sometimes the king himself. Our ancestors heard with detestation and horror those sentiments rudely delivered, and pushed to most absurd extremes, by the violence of a Cade and a Tyler, which have since been applauded with a zeal rising almost to idolatry when softened and recommended by the eloquence, the moderation, and the arguments of a Locke, a Sidney, and a Milton."*

* Blackstone, book iv. chap. 33.

CHAPTER IV.

THE REFORMATION.

Its Origin. — Selfish Motives of Henry VIII. — His Persecution of Protestants. — The Bloody Statute. — National System of Belief dictated by the King. — Luther and Leo the Tenth. — Cruelty and Folly of Henry VIII. — Slow Progress of Civilisation. — Wickliffe's Failure and Luther's Success. — The Reformation forwarded by the Art of Printing. — Commercial State of England under Henry VIII. — Augmentation of the Middle Class.

THIS memorable event in our annals was most beneficial to civilisation, although it can scarcely be said to have been the fruit of conscientious conviction on the part of all those by whom it was abetted. The abuses in the Church of Rome had indeed reached to a pitch of the utmost folly and atrocity. Still the people of England would probably have acquiesced in them, had not Henry VIII., who ruled the nation with a rod of iron, found it convenient to quarrel with the Pope, who would not sanction his repudiation of Queen Catherine when he desired to marry Anne Bullen. Of consistency in opinion, Henry was audaciously regardless. He was a partizan on *both sides* in the dispute between Martin Luther and the Pope; at first acrimoniously vituperating the German reformer in a book which, being sent to

Rome, so gratified the Pontiff as to induce him to reward Henry with the title of "Defender of the Faith," a distinction inconsistently borne to the present day by the Tudor king's *protestant* successors. Leo the Tenth little anticipated, that in styling Henry the defender of papacy, he was conferring a decoration on one who would soon become the most formidable enemy that had ever arisen against the Church of Rome.

"Henry VIII." says Milton, "was the first that rent this kingdom from the Pope's subjection totally; but his quarrel being more about supremacy, than other faultiness in religion that he regarded, it is no marvel if he stuck where he did. The next default was in the bishops, who, though they had renounced the Pope, still hugged the popedom, and shared the authority among themselves." *

This is perfectly true; for though Henry defied the Pope's supremacy, he was not a favourer of Protestants. On the contrary, he considered their doctrines so dangerous to the spiritual domination he sought to exercise, that he enacted rigorous laws against them, some of which were as arbitrary and cruel as, in a spiritual sense, was any anathema ever thundered from the Vatican. Being determined to show that, in abolishing the papal authority, he had not changed his religion, Henry hastened to give a signal proof of the hatred he bore to the reformed tenets.

* Milton, "Of Reformation in England."

When the doctrines of Luther were known in England, they were secretly entertained by the middle class of that day, as well as by some of the upper. "Henry VIII. had been educated in a strict attachment to the Church of Rome, and he bore particular prejudice against Luther; he opposed himself, therefore, to the progress of the Lutheran tenets, by all the influence which his extensive and absolute authority conferred upon him."*

"The Parliament meeting the 28th of April, 1539, immediately made, *by the direction of the Court*, a law intitled 'An Act for abolishing diversity of opinions in certain Articles concerning the Christian Religion.' This is the law that is more commonly known by the name of the Bloody Statute, in consequence of its severity to Protestants. The penalty of burning or hanging was enacted against those, I. Who by word or writing denied transubstantiation; — II. Who maintained that communion in both kinds was necessary; — III. Or that it was lawful for priests to marry; — IV. Or that vows of celibacy may be broken; — V. Or that private masses are unprofitable; — VI. Or lastly, that auricular confession is not necessary to salvation. By this and some former laws, which *settled what was to be believed in matter of religion*, all subjects were almost equally liable to the pains enacted therein. Indeed, this last law, with those

* Hume's Hist., chap. xxix.

that were made before against the Pope's authority, contained the King's belief, *but not the nation's.* There was hardly a person in the kingdom but what believed either more or less, and yet no one dared openly to swerve from it, either to the right or left. The reformed however were the greatest sufferers by it, and indeed it was levelled against them." *

"Henry VIII., after partly removing the veil of ignorance from the eyes of the people, required them not to go a step further; and commanded the nation by act of parliament to believe six articles of faith therein laid down, and whatever else the King might choose to ordain." †

But though his despotism thus threatened all those who might be inclined to favour Luther, he was equally violent against the monks, who had questioned his spiritual ascendancy. Accordingly, instigated by revenge and lust for gold, he suppressed the monasteries, and seized on their enormous revenues, after perpetrating acts of cruelty against those who resisted his spoliation.

But as Providence sometimes uses bad agents to effect good purposes, the violence of Henry may have been necessary to shake the firm structure of popery.

"The throne of St. Peter in former centuries seems to have gained stability from each abortive attempt

* Rapin, vol. i. p. 821.

† Lord John Russell, Hist. of the English Cons., chap. v.

to disturb it. The vices of the clergy, and even of the Roman Court itself, and the demand of the Christian world for reformation, were all alike disregarded. The policy of Rome had allowed a certain quantity of liberty to her subjects. Beyond that customary limit no one seemed disposed to venture. If any symptom of such a disposition had appeared, the Pontiffs had not yet lost confidence in the arts of intimidation and intrigue. Certainly no human foresight could have anticipated the future. In the preceding century a new world had been discovered, but the discovery of ten thousand worlds was not half so incredible as that an obscure monk in Germany should shake the very foundations of popery, and, by his single-handed intrepidity, effect such wide and permanent reformation as princes and general councils, and the whole Christian world combined, had never yet had the hardihood to contemplate." *

It is impossible to discover anything like sound religious feeling in the conduct of Henry VIII., who was ambitious of being a kind of pope in England. Public opinion had not yet manifested itself with sufficient power to be pronounced. There was, however, a perpetual change in the King's religious doctrines; and so rapid and numerous were they, that men could scarcely follow them, though inattention (construed into heresy) was sure to lead to death on the scaffold. In all

* Ecclesiastical Hist., vol. v. p. 96.

the acts of this despot, Parliament was a servile abettor. The middle class in the nation was too small to have any influence in public affairs. The upper had been bribed by wealth taken from the dissolved monasteries; and the lower was steeped in apathy and ignorance. Civilisation had made but little progress at this period. Thus the entire community obeyed Henry's edicts, and implicitly shaped their faith according to his dictation. Had Henry, instead of lavishing on his courtiers the monastic and conventual revenues, made them an appendage to the crown, the power which this large treasure would have given to his successors on the throne, by making them independent of parliament for money, might have deferred, for a time, the rebellion which occurred in the reign of Charles I.; but it must eventually have happened, had no improvement in the government taken place.

But, if the motives of Henry VIII., in commencing the Reformation, may be accused of selfishness, cupidity, and revenge, the conduct of Luther is not altogether free from similar imputations. When Leo the Tenth, by the lavish expenditure in which he gratified his love of luxurious magnificence, found his treasury exhausted, he devised a scheme for raising money by selling indulgences, which were to free the purchaser from the pains of purgatory, and, by paying an advanced price, his friends might be included in the immunity. This traffic was carried on in many parts of Europe; and

in Saxony, the Augustine friars were, at first, made sole "consignees" (to speak commercially) of these spiritual commodities,—an agency which ensured them, by way of commission, considerable profit. The Pope's minister, however, suspecting the accuracy of their accounts, transferred the lucrative business to the Dominicans. Martin Luther, being an Augustine monk, was indignant that he and his brethren had been deprived of so much good trade, and immediately denounced the efficacy of the indulgences; and, being of a fiery temper, soon proceeded to greater acts of insubordination, and at length denied the Pope's authority altogether.

The Reformation, great and beneficial as its influence has been, originated both in Germany and England from questionable motives.

Luther's subsequent conduct, however, in great measure redeemed its commencement. That of Henry was throughout tyrannical and vile. He slaughtered indifferently the advocates of *both sides* of the religious dispute. The learned Bishop Fisher, and the able and conscientious Sir Thomas More, were executed for refusing the oath of supremacy with which the King had invested himself; while, at the same time, he condemned many Protestants to the stake. His resentment, moreover, against all who had ever impugned the royal authority, carried him to the enormous folly of causing the bones of Thomas à Becket (whose rich shrine he had pillaged) to be cited into court,

when the saint was condemned as a traitor, his name erased from the calendar, and sentence of burning pronounced on his bones! This surely was the act of a madman, no less than of a tyrant. But in whatever way Henry gratified his royal will, no opposition was manifested by the people, who witnessed with wonder, but with entire submission, the victims of popery and protestantism dragged in couples to the stake or to the scaffold.

The Reformation in England, therefore, although the first blow to popery was struck by Henry, did not bear its good fruit in *his* reign. Its consummation was reserved for a later period.

"In Edward the Sixth's days," says Milton, "why a complete reformation was not effected, to any considerate man may appear. First, he no sooner entered into his kingdom, but into a war with Scotland; from whence the Protector, returning with victory, had but newly put his hand to repeal the six articles, and throw the images out of churches, but rebellions on all sides, stirred up by obdurate Papists, and other tumults, with a plain war in Norfolk holding tack against two of the King's generals, made them of force content themselves with what they had already done."

It is curious, by looking at the state of society during the Reformation, to trace the slow but sure progress of civilisation. Henry VIII. committed acts that would have rivalled the most sanguinary of the Roman emperors, and ruled with more

absolute power than any other monarch in Europe. His parliaments were a mere farce, and the boasted English constitution and Magna Charta were spoken of in theory, but certainly not put in practice. If the relative proportion of the several classes had continued as it then was to the present time, and the people had not increased in the requisites for civilisation, a reasonable doubt cannot be entertained that absolute power would still exist, with the occasional episode of a Jack Cade movement.

This despotism lasted during the reigns of Mary, Elizabeth, and even James I., although the seeds of civilisation sown by the Reformation, by industry, by the invention of printing, by the sub-division of the larger landed properties of the feudal chiefs, and of the suppressed religious houses, were gradually germinating, and expanding into blossom and fruit.

Admitting the doctrines of Martin Luther had been propagated in England at a much earlier period, for example, in the days of Henry IV., it is probable that, like those of Wickliffe, they would have perished in the birth, and produced no effect; information was not sufficient in the community at the time.

The doctrines of Wickliffe were in many respects similar to those of Luther: the former was desirous to reform what he considered the errors and corruptions that had been introduced into the Romish Church, and to adopt the Scriptures only as a rule

or guide, in place of the writings of the Fathers; but in this attempt Wickliffe failed, and Luther succeeded. Whence did this happen? How was it that the same tenets should be adopted at one period, and rejected at an antecedent time? Simply, because the extent of civilisation in the people, when Wickliffe attempted *his* reformation, was not sufficient to support him; but in Elizabeth's reign there was just knowledge enough to vindicate the principles of the Reformation.

It is singular to see the manner in which the memory of Wickliffe was endeavoured to be aspersed after his decease, as stated by an old church historian:—"Hitherto the corpse of John Wickliffe had quietly slept in his grave about forty-one years after his death, till his body was reduced to bones, and his bones almost to dust; but now, such was the spleen of the council of Constance, as they not only cursed his memory as dying an obstinate heretic, but ordered that his bones (with this charitable caution,—if they may be discerned from the bodies of other faithful people) be taken out of the ground, and thrown far off from any Christian burial. In obedience hereunto, Richard Fleming, Bishop of Lincoln, diocesan of Lutterworth, sent his officers (vultures with a quick sight and scent at a dead carcase) to ungrave him. Accordingly, to Lutterworth they come, sumner, commissary, official, chancellor, proctors, doctors, and their servants (so that the remnant of the body would not hold out a

bone amongst so many hands), take what was left out of the grave, and burn them to ashes, and cast them into Swift, a neighbouring brook running hard by. Thus this brook has conveyed his ashes into Avon, Avon into Severn, Severn into the narrow seas, they into the main ocean; and thus the ashes of Wickliffe are the emblem of his doctrine, which now is dispersed all the world over."*

An historian observes, "The King, by Luther's intemperate language, was still more prejudiced against the new doctrines; but the public, who naturally favour the weaker party, were inclined to attribute to Luther the victory in dispute."† Again, "The art of printing, and the revival of learning, forwarded its progress (the Reformation) in another manner. By means of that art the books of Luther and his sectaries, full of vehemence, declamation, and rude eloquence, were propagated more quickly and in greater numbers. The minds of men, somewhat awakened from a profound sleep for so many centuries, were prepared for every novelty, and scrupled less to tread in any unusual path which was opened to them; and as copies of the Scriptures became more common, men perceived the innovations which were introduced after the first centuries."‡

Thus we perceive that the slow and gradual ad-

* Fuller's Church Hist. † Father Paul Sleidan, lib. i.
‡ Hume.

vance in the elements for civilisation was indispensable to foster the Reformation, to make it palatable and in accordance with the sentiments of the people, and to be clearly understood by them: from what has been said of the state of information in the people under this monarch, such seems to have been the case.

Additional information on the low condition of the country under Henry VIII. may be derived from the fact of his being obliged, in order to fit out a navy, to hire ships from Hamburg, Dantzic, Genoa, and Venice. Even in the days of Elizabeth there were but few manufactures. "The state of English manufactures was at this time very low, and foreign wares of almost all kinds had the preference." * About the year 1590 four persons only in London were rated in the subsidy-book so high as four hundred pounds. † In 1571 an act passed, condemning usury, but permitting 10 per cent. to be paid: Henry IV. of France reduced interest in that country to 6½ per cent., which shows that money was more plentiful there than here. The communication of England with Muscovy began in Queen Mary's time; but was not carried on with activity until the year 1569, when an exclusive trade was obtained for the English from the Czar of that country. ‡ The trade to Turkey commenced

* D'Ewes, p. 505.
† Stowe, p. 497.
‡ Camden, p. 408.

about the year 1583, and was confined to a company.* The merchants of the Hanse Towns began at this time to complain, and to entertain some jealousy of the growing commerce of England.

Thus we see the gentle flow of the elements of civilisation and of public opinion, from the very low ebb at which they were in the early part and middle of the sixteenth century.

It required all the absolute control, and the great command of means, as already stated, possessed by Henry VIII. from the wealth of the monasteries, to enable him successfully to throw off the yoke of Rome; the same apathy and ignorance that is discernible in his reign, continued to the day of Elizabeth; even then it needed the power and influence of the Government to effect a change in the national religion.

Much, however, must the requisites for civilisation have increased in the English nation, when we observe, that within the short period of a century and a half the almost universal sentiments of the community were in favour of reformation and of civil liberty, — that to secure them James II. was expelled from his throne, which he might have preserved, had both been conceded to the nation.

External trade and commerce had much increased from the days of Elizabeth, which tended to augment the middle class, and spread information

* Birch's Mem., vol. i. p. 36.

through the community. Puffendorff observes: "The sea is very advantageous to England, for thereby the English, being separated from their neighbouring nations, cannot easily be attacked; whereas they may easily invade others: and because this island is situated in the very middle of Europe in a narrow sea, where all ships which either go east or westward must pass by, and having a deep coast and commodious harbours, it lies most convenient for commerce or trade, which the English carry on in most parts of the world."*

* Puffendorff, Intro. History of Europe, sect. 34. p. 157. 8vo edit.

CHAPTER V.

THE REBELLION.

State of the Nation. — Undefined Power of the Crown incompatible with the Growth and Increase of the Middle Class. — Absolute Power of James I. — Policy of placing Persons of Property in possession of political Influence. — Mistakes committed by Charles I. — Great Property of the third Parliament.

As Clarendon observes, this is a melancholy period in our history. It is one of which the account cannot be perused without sentiments of regret; but it was an event which necessarily arose from the state of society, and the growing influence of the middle class, amongst which the requisites for civilisation were disseminated to a moderate extent, yet sufficiently to have shown the well-meaning, but misguided monarch, that it was his interest and his duty to yield to public opinion, and by diminishing the unbounded prerogative of the crown, to grant that security to the people which they had a right to demand, and power to enforce.

Let us take a brief survey of the state of the laws of England, and of the manner in which they were administered previously to the Rebellion, and as-

certain the amount of security of person and property enjoyed by the nation.

If Henry VIII. assumed the right to send any consort of his that displeased him to the block, he had also power to sacrifice any other individual in his kingdom. Should any doubts yet remain as to his despotism, the following passage will dispel them. One of the influential members of the Commons (Montague) being on his knees before Henry, had the mortification to hear him speak in these words: "Ho! man! will they not suffer my bill to pass?" After which, laying his hand on Montague's head, who was still on his knees, he added: "Get my bill passed by to-morrow, or else to-morrow this head of thine shall be off." * In the same reign, Cardinal Wolsey, endeavouring to terrify the citizens of London into the general loan exacted at that time, told them, "It were better that some people suffer indigence, than that the King, at this time, should lack; and therefore beware and resist not, nor ruffle not in this case, for it may fortune to cost some people their heads." † There are innumerable proofs of the similar absolute sway exercised also by Henry's successors.

The following, of many instances, will show the kind of liberty enjoyed in former times. A law passed in the reign of Henry VIII. ‡ giving to the King's proclamations, to a certain extent, the force

* Grant's Life of Wolsey.

† Hall, fol. 38.

‡ 31 Henry VIII. chap. 8.

of acts of parliament, enacts, that offenders convicted of breaking any such proclamations shall be brought before certain persons (members of the privy council, with some bishops) in the Star Chamber, or elsewhere, and shall suffer such penalties of fine and imprisonment as they shall adjudge.

When, in the same reign, Wolsey required 800,000*l.* from the Commons, they declared their inability to grant the demand, as it exceeded the amount of the current coin of the realm. After a long debate of many days it was determined, that part of the sum should be granted. Wolsey, greatly dissatisfied with the Commons, compelled the people to pay up the whole subsidy at once. * After this occurrence, no parliament was assembled by Henry VIII. for seven years, and commissioners were appointed throughout the kingdom to swear every man to the value of his possessions, requiring a rateable part according to such declaration.

In 1545, commissioners were again appointed by Henry VIII. to obtain money from the people by what was miscalled "a benevolence." These commissioners intimated, that his Majesty could not take less than twenty-pence in the pound on the yearly value of *land*, and half that sum on moveable goods. They were to summon few at one time, and to commune with them apart, lest some one unreasonable man amongst so many, forgetting his duty

* Rapin's Life of More.

towards God, his sovereign lord, and his country, may go about by his malicious forwardness to silence all the rest, be they never so well disposed to use good words and amiable behaviour to induce men to contribute; but if any person, notwithstanding their *gentle* solicitations, should, alleging either poverty, or some other pretence which should be deemed unfit to be allowed, &c.*

The commission issued in 1557 authorises the persons named in it to inquire, by any means they could devise, into charges of heresy, or other religious offences, and in some instances to punish the guilty.† A proclamation in the last year of Mary's reign, after denouncing the importation of books filled with heresy and treason from beyond sea, declares, that whoever should be found to have such books in his possession, should be reported and taken for a rebel, and *executed according to martial law.*‡

In the subsequent reign, Queen Elizabeth made constant use of her prerogative of purveyance and wardship. Burleigh, in one of his speeches, proposes to the Queen, that she should confer on commissioners a general inquisitorial power over the whole kingdom. He sets before her the example of her wise grandfather, Henry VII., who, by such

* Instructions of Henry VIII.'s Council to the Commissioners for raising a benevolence from the people in 1545. — *Lodge's Illustrations of British Hist.*, vol. i. p. 711.

† Lingard, vol. vii. p. 200. ‡ Strype, vol. iii. p. 459.

methods extremely augmented his revenue; and he recommends that this new court should proceed, "as well by the direction and ordinary course of the laws, as by virtue of her Majesty's supreme regimen and *absolute power*, from whence law proceeded. * If the sovereign had not possessed absolute power, no minister of the character of Burleigh could have entertained such an idea, or made such a proposition.

The members of the court of Star Chamber were men who enjoyed their offices during pleasure. When the prince was present, he was the sole judge, and all others could only interpose their advice. A writer favourable to the Stuarts observes, "There needed but this one court in any government, to put an end to all regular, legal, and exact plans of liberty; for who dared to set himself in opposition to the crown or ministry, or aspire to the character of being a patron of freedom, while exposed to so arbitrary a jurisdiction? It is a question whether any of the absolute monarchies in Europe contain at present so illegal and despotic a tribunal." † Another power, often exercised, existed in that age, namely, imprisonment in any jail, and during any time that ministers thought proper, without any other authority than an order from the secretary of state, or privy council. Similar punishments might also be inflicted by inferior

* Annals, vol. iii. p. 234. † Hume's Hist., Appendix iii.

magistrates. In 1588, several citizens were committed to prison by the Lord Mayor, because they refused to pay the loan demanded of them." *

Hume, when speaking of Elizabeth's reign, observes, "It appears that those members (of the Commons) who had been committed, were detained in custody till the Queen thought proper to release them. Certain questions of Mr. Wentworth, father of Lord Strafford (concerning the Queen's prerogative), are curious, because they contain some faint dawn of the present English constitution, though suddenly eclipsed by the arbitrary government of Elizabeth. Wentworth was, indeed, the true forerunner of the Hampdens, the Pyms, and the Hollises, who in the next age, with less courage, because with less danger, rendered their principles so triumphant. I shall only ask, whether it be not sufficiently clear, from all these transactions, that in the two succeeding reigns it was the people who encroached upon the sovereign, not the sovereign who attempted, as is pretended, to usurp upon the people?" †

In the speech of a member of the Commons, in opposition to the Queen at that time, is the following passage:—"If it were a charge imposed upon us by her Majesty's commandment, or a demand proceeding from her Majesty by way of request, there is no one amongst us all, either so disobedient a subject in regard to our duty, or so unthankful,

* Murden, p. 632. † Hume's Hist., note, vol. v.

which would not with frank consent, both of voice and heart, most willingly submit himself thereunto, without any unreserved inquiry into the causes thereof. * For it is continually in the mouths of us all, that our lands, goods, and lives, are at our prince's disposing; and it agreeth very well with that position of the civil law which sayeth, 'quod omnia regis sunt.'* In a debate on an act concerning common law in cases of letters-patent, one member said, "This bill may touch the prerogative royal, which is so transcendant that the subject may not aspire thereto." Another said, "As to the prerogative royal of the prince, for my own part, I ever allowed it; and it is such as I hope will never be discussed." On a subsequent debate on the bill against monopolies, a member † said, "It is to no purpose to offer to tie her Majesty's hands by act of Parliament, when she may loosen herself at pleasure." Another ‡ said, "God hath given that power to absolute princes, which he attributes to himself — Dixi quod Dii estis." Mr. Secretary § said, "I am servant to the Queen, and before I would speak and give consent to a case that would debase her prerogative, or abridge it, I would wish that my tongue were cut out of my head. I am sure there were law-makers (meaning that the sovereign was above the laws) before there were laws. ‖

* Strype, vol. iii. p. 239.
† Mr. Spicer.
‡ Mr. Davies.
§ Cecil.
‖ D'Ewes, p. 619.

In the year 1591, the judges made a solemn decree, that England was an absolute empire, of which the monarch was the head: in consequence they determined, that as head of the church the sovereign might by her prerogative erect such a court of ecclesiastical commission, and the inference is, that her power was equally absolute over the laity. * Even so late as the year 1685, an assertion is made, that "a man is bound to obey the King's command against law, nay, in some cases, *against divine law.*" General laws made in Parliament may, by the King's authority, be mitigated or suspended upon causes known to him alone: by the coronation oath he is only bound to obey good laws, of which he is the judge. †

If any other proofs are required that the English were governed by despotic monarchs, and in fact had no constitution previously to the Revolution in 1688, the following instances in the reign of James I., may place the question beyond the shadow of doubt.

In the conference which took place, by order of that monarch, between the House of Commons and the judges, James said, "This conference he commanded as an absolute king, and that all their privileges were derived from his grant, and he hoped they would not turn them against him. ‡ Not only

* Coke's Rep., p. 5.; Caudrey's case.
† Sir R. Filmer, Patriarcha, pp. 98—100.
‡ Journals, 25th March and 5th April, 1604.

were the powers of the crown almost unlimited, but the feudal barons still retained a high position in the state. "A waterman belonging to a man of quality having a squabble with a citizen about his fare, showed his badge (the crest of his master, which was a swan), and insisted on better treatment from the citizen. The other replied carelessly, that he cared not about that goose. For this offence he was summoned before the marshal's court, was fined for having defamed the nobleman's crest, by calling the swan a goose, and was in effect reduced to beggary." *

"Sir Richard Granville, who thought himself ill-used by the Earl of Suffolk in a lawsuit, was accused before the Star Chamber of having said of that nobleman, that he was a base lord. The evidence against him was somewhat lame; yet for this offence, insufficiently proved, he was condemned to pay a fine of 8,000*l.*, half to the earl, the other to the King." †

"Ray having exported fullers' earth, contrary to the King's proclamation, was, besides the pillory, condemned in the Star Chamber to a fine of 2,000*l.*" ‡

Like fines were levied on Terry, Enner, and others, for disobeying a proclamation which forbade the exportation of gold. §

* Clarendon's Life, vol. i. p. 72. † Lansdowne, p. 514.
‡ Rushworth, vol. ii. p. 381. § Ibid. p. 350.

The ambassador of James at Madrid, when pressed to enter into a league with Spain, declared that "his Majesty was an absolute king, and therefore not bound to give an account to any of his actions."* In the preface to "The History of the World," is the following passage:—"Philip II., by a strong hand and main force, attempted to make himself an absolute monarch over the Netherlands, *like unto the monarchs of England and France.*" † Further, if King James the First's own words are taken, it will be seen in what light he considered his prerogative, and the idea he entertained of Parliament. These words he published before his accession to the English crown, and consequently at a time when he would naturally be careful not to assert any doctrine, or assume any position, contrary to the established law of England, or to the sentiments entertained by the people:—"A good king," says he, "although he be above the law, will subject and frame his actions thereto for example's sake to his subjects, and of his own free will, but not as subject or bound thereto." ‡ In another passage:—"We daily see that in Parliament (which is nothing else but the head court of the King and his vassals) the laws are but *craved* by his subjects." In Parliament, in this reign, ideas seem to have been entertained not dissimilar to

* Winwood, vol. ii. p. 222.
† Raleigh's History of the World.
‡ King James's Works, p. 202.

these of the King. "A patriot member, in arguing against the impositions (by James I.), frankly allowed, that the King of England was endowed with as ample power and prerogative as any prince in Christendom." *

A sufficient number of instances have probably been brought together, to show distinctly that the power of the Tudors in England, and the Stuarts in Great Britain, was above all control. If more are deemed necessary, they will be found in various authors †, by some of whom it is asserted, that in those days France was the most legal and popular monarchy in Europe.

The reign of James I. was one in which the requisites for public opinion began to spread, and a middle class was perceptible in the nation; the seed sown in the days of Henry VII. was germinating and striking root.

Industry and commerce gradually increased, and their result also became gradually apparent. It has already been observed that the regal power in those days was independent of the other branches of the legislature: there was, besides, considerable property attached to the Crown. This property, however, the King's necessities obliged him to dispose of, much to the loss of his own power, as is

* Journals, April 18. 1614.

† See Sir Walter Raleigh's Works; the Βασιλικον Δωρον; Malherbe's Works; also his Dissertations on Livy, and Overall's Convocation Book.

observed by a well-known historian*:—"His profuseness (James I.) drew two other things upon him, which broke the authority of the Crown, and the dependence of the nation upon it. The Crown had a great estate over all England, which was let out upon leases for years, and a small rent was reserved. So most of the great families of the nation were the tenants of the Crown, and a great many *boroughs* were depending on the estates so held. The renewal of these leases brought in fines to the Crown and to the great officers, besides that the fear of being denied a renewal kept all in dependence on the Crown. [This influence was lost when] King James obtained a power of granting, that is, of selling these estates for ever." Thus did the middle class imperceptibly increase, and grow into notice and importance; and public opinion, determining to limit the royal prerogative, brought about the dissensions between Charles I. and his Parliament, which ended in the rebellion.

The situation of Charles was one of peculiar difficulty: a middle class, as we have seen, had lately been called into existence, of which neither that monarch, nor the advisers he admitted to his councils, appear to have been aware. They entertained no notion that public opinion could be current in the nation. The novelty of their position added to its difficulty. They were ignorant of the causes and effects of the Reformation, and knew not that a

* Burnet's Hist., vol. i.

sentiment hitherto unknown had entered in the minds of the people, and that civilisation was advancing.

The monarch's absolute power could not, therefore, but bring on a collision with the feeling that had spread through the upper and part of the middle classes. Men of talent were to be found, capable and willing to give an opinion on any political subject likely to be adopted by the greater part of the well-informed in the community. The ideas thus disseminated resemble, in some measure, our notions of public opinion. Charles, on the other hand, was inclined to uphold the prerogative. He even deemed it his duty not to give his consent to any concession, and felt unwilling to be deprived of that absolute power which was enjoyed by his ancestors, and which he deemed to be his birthright.

In those days, even, it must have been apparent that such an uncontrolled power in the Crown could not be compatible with whatever extent of civilisation and public opinion might exist: hence arose those unhappy differences, followed by a civil war, and terminating in the destruction of the unfortunate monarch. When the rebellion broke out, the nation seems to have been divided, although not in equal proportions, between Charles and his Parliament: the cause of the latter was espoused by nearly the entire of the middle class, part of the upper, and a great portion of the lower class, influenced by the two former. On the side of the

monarch were the remainder of the upper class, great part of the legal profession, the courtiers and persons attached to the sovereign, and that part of the lower class under their influence. At the first breaking out of the civil war, that is, after Charles raised his standard at Nottingham, some doubt might be entertained as to the termination of the contest; but as it became protracted, it was evident that the result must be in favour of Parliament, as public opinion daily grew stronger, from the discussions on popular rights which such a contest would naturally produce, whilst the other side became proportionably weaker from the same cause.

Some passages from leading historians of those days, taking the facts they state without any of their conclusions, may throw a light on the subject.

The decision of the judges in favour of the king in the case of ship-money, did his cause great injury with the public, and made Hampden more popular than ever. Lord Clarendon says, — "And here the damage and mischief cannot be expressed that the Crown and state sustained by the deserved reproach and infamy that attended the judges, by being made use of in this and like acts of power, there being no possibility to preserve the dignity, revenue, and estimation of the laws themselves, but by the integrity and innocence of the judges." *

From this it appears, that something like public feeling was manifested, since the decision of the

* Vol. i. p. 109.

judges in Hampden's case occasioned so much disgust in the minds of the people.

Whenever the state of parties in a country is such as to render it probable that a civil war might be the result, the good feeling of the people, and the influence of whatever public opinion exists, is so decidedly averse from such a measure, that for a length of time the community will remain passive, more especially when public opinion is not sufficiently manifested to determine the question unanimously and without difficulty.

This seems to have been the state of affairs in England at the beginning of the dissensions in the reign of Charles I. Public opinion deemed the acquisition of certain rights indispensable for the security of the people, and was determined they should be obtained; but no desire, had the proper concessions then been made, could exist in the most intellectual and best informed, to drive affairs to extremity, or to set themselves in open defiance to the authority of the Crown. The third Parliament summoned by Charles could not, from the property possessed by its members, be desirous of upsetting the laws, or of creating confusion: they are thus described: — "When the Commons assembled, they appeared to be men of the same independent spirit with their predecessors, and possessed of such riches, that their property was computed to surpass three times that of the House of Peers." *

* Sanderson, p. 106.

At the commencement of the contest between Charles and his Parliament, public opinion, though probably adverse to civil war, and conscious of the dangers to which individual property in the country would be exposed, seems yet to have been aware, that no alternative remained, and that either the political rights which the people were entitled to claim must be abandoned, or an opposition must necessarily be made to the King's prerogative. Then did public opinion gradually rise against the monarch, and support the proceedings of the Parliament, until Charles was in their power.* "His reign (Charles I.) both in peace and war, was a continual series of errors; so that it does not appear that he had a true judgment of things. He was out of measure set on following his humour, but unreasonably feeble to those whom he trusted, chiefly to the queen. He had too high a notion of the regal power, and thought that every opposition to it was rebellion."†

In the subsequent proceedings, such as the cruel

* "In some debate in the Commons' House, respecting an alleged libel, Marten defended the writer, and in his speech said, it was certainly better, in the case of a nation and its government, that one family should be destroyed than many. Another member of the House interrupted him, to inquire to whom he alluded. Marten immediately rejoined, 'The King and his children.' For these words he was expelled the House (Aug. 16.) and sent to the Tower, and not restored to his seat for two years and four months." — *Journal of the Commons*, Sept. 2.

† Burnet's Hist. of his Own Times, book i.

condemnation of Charles, and Cromwell's domination over the parliament, public opinion had no concern. These, and similar acts, were the work of the army and of its ambitious leaders, headed by the dictator, and could not be sanctioned by the well-disposed part of the nation. * The middle class had, indeed, risen into notice, and into some importance; but it was not sufficiently powerful to oppose a successful resistance, even if so inclined, to the lower class and a fanatical army, led by a favourite general. Nearly the same observation will apply to the state of the middle class in France at the close of the last century, as we may attempt to show when the progress of civilisation in that country is under consideration.

No reasonable doubt can be entertained that the conduct of that unfortunate monarch, Charles I., had alienated from him the entire middle class of the nation. This is evident, not only from the assistance given to the parliamentary forces during the continuance of the civil war, but from the several publications of those days, and by the votes and sentiments of the Commons, before the total rupture with the monarch had taken place.

* "Cromwell and his council had made such abundant use of arbitrary imprisonment, that they had become utterly insensible to the character to which such a proceeding is justly entitled. They imprisoned men on suspicion, or without suspicion, often by way of precaution only, and set them at liberty when they pleased, or retained them as long as they pleased." — *Burnet's Hist. of the Commonwealth*, vol. iv. p. 277.

CHAPTER VI.

CIVIL WAR.

The Nation adverse from proceeding to Extremities against their Sovereign.—A Change required by Public Opinion.—Cromwell's Government more despotic even than that of Charles.—Puritan Sentiments prevalent.—Middle Class not trusted by the Government of Charles.

MUCH as the desire for liberty had increased in the nation, and anxious as were the best informed of the community to secure their persons and property from the caprice of the executive power, and to establish a constitutional form of government, yet no desire existed, as already observed, in the people to proceed to the extreme lengths which were adopted by Cromwell and his brother regicides, supported, not by the public sentiment, but by fanaticism, and hatred to royalty.

"They who of late," says Milton, speaking of the Long Parliament, "were extolled as our greatest deliverers, and had the people wholly at their devotion, did not only weaken and unfit themselves to be dispensers of what liberty they pretended, but unfitted also the people, now grown worse and more disordinate, to receive or to digest any liberty at all."

Whatever may be asserted by historians of the early days of Charles, or by subsequent writers on the subject, it does not appear, as already shown, that in the reign of that unfortunate monarch any resemblance to a liberal or constitutional form of government was enjoyed by the nation. A parliament was in existence—Magna Charta was known; but the authority of the sovereign superseded the former, and the latter was talked of theoretically, but never put in practice. No security of person or property was possessed by the nation; but the growing information of the people, and the rise of the middle class, although they were overlooked by the King's government, rendered it absolutely necessary that some alteration should take place.

A few instances only will prove that this nation enjoyed no greater liberty under Cromwell and his Parliament, than it did under Charles I. The latter was an absolute monarch, but the former ruled by military despotism, which was more intolerable.

The conduct of the factions towards each other, evinces the roughness of sentiment and deficiency in civilisation prevalent at this period. The rancour exhibited, and the persevering animosity of men eminent in that day, is remarkable. When Strafford had given up the liberal party, and espoused warmly the cause of the monarch, he met his old friend Pym, and said,—"You see, Pym, I have left you."—"So I perceive," answered Pym; "but we will never leave you so long as you have a head on your

shoulders." This promise was faithfully kept; Pym impeached Strafford, and did not lose sight of his victim till he saw his head fall on the scaffold.

On the side of Parliament, the regicides, and nearly all those who took an active part in the rebellion, died by violence, with the exception of Pym and Cromwell. We mention this occurrence to show the conduct of parties towards each other in those days, and the violence of political feeling then prevalent.

"They were a remarkable party who assembled round the council-table of Charles I. Besides the unfortunate monarch, there sat the magnificent Buckingham, the loyal Hamilton, the stately Strafford, the high-churchman Laud, the melancholy Falkland, and the gay and graceful Holland. In the midst of their haughty councils and high resolves, how little did they foresee the wretched fate which awaited them! There was not one of that assembly whose death was not violent. Charles, Hamilton, Strafford, Laud, and Holland, died on the scaffold; Buckingham fell by the hand of an assassin, and Falkland on the battle-field. Were we to select from the party a single individual whose brilliant qualities and open character would most strongly contrast with the wily fanatics and mushroom politicians of that age, our choice would fall on the stately Strafford. The nobleness of his disposition, his undeviating rectitude, his mental accomplishments, and stedfast fidelity to his so-

vereign; his high bearing, his long line of ancestry, and his graceful manners, — are in strong relief, not only to the Harrisons and Barebones, but even to the Cromwells, and Pyms, and Iretons of the day."*

The power and influence of the Crown at this time was such, through the Star Chamber, the undefined extent of the prerogative, and other means at the disposal of the sovereign, that it seems not probable that public opinion alone could have effected such a change, and offered so successful a resistance to the regal authority, if a puritanical spirit, totally distinct from true religious feeling, had not spread extensively amongst the lower class.

The elements of civilisation certainly did not exist previously to the Reformation; the reign of Henry VII. was beyond comparison more harsh, and the influence of the prerogative applied in a more stringent manner under that monarch, and in the days of his successor Henry VIII., than it was under Charles I., whose personal character was not unamiable, and who was far from being an unjust or cruel sovereign. With all these qualities, however, on the part of the King, the nation was not satisfied; and those rights were demanded, which, a century before, were not known by the people. To exemplify this, and prove how sedulously the public mind even then was courted, it may not be irrelevant to show the anxiety displayed

* Jesse, Memoirs of the Stuarts.

by both parties to conciliate public opinion previously to the commencement of hostilities between Charles and his Parliament. "It was ordered [by the latter] that their declaration, which they had sent to the King, should be speedily printed, and carefully dispersed throughout the kingdom, that the people might see upon what terms they stood, and all other possible courses were taken."* This celebrated remonstrance was, after a violent debate, drawn up and published (A.D. 1641); an act quite unprecedented in those days. The publication of this remonstrance, it will be remembered, created a difference between the then leading members in the House, when Mr. Hyde, afterwards Lord Clarendon, and others seceded. Both parties were fully aware of the great importance (even at that period) of such an appeal to the public, from one of the branches of the legislature. It is worthy of remark, that during the differences in question, various manifestoes and appeals were written and published by each party. These, it is evident, were drawn up and made public, not for the sake of the parties to whom they were addressed, because each side was too fully bent on its line of conduct, and too much engaged either by prejudice or party feeling, to be diverted from its purpose.

In following the progress of the civil war, which may be said to have commenced from the day that the King first openly declared hostilities to the Par-

* Clarendon's Rebell. and Civil War, book iv.

liament, there will be little difficulty in ascertaining to which side public opinion was inclined.

To demonstrate this, abundant evidence will be found in contemporary writers, particularly in Lord Clarendon's History, whose testimony in this case is of the greater weight, inasmuch as he could not be deemed unfavourable to the royal cause, and as one who took an active and prominent part in what he relates. We will take his statement of facts without his deductions. "For though "says he," the gentlemen of ancient families and estates in England were, for the most part, well affected to the King, and easily discerned by what faction the Parliament was governed, yet there were a people of an inferior degree, who, by good husbandry, clothing, and other thriving arts, had gotten very great fortunes, and by degrees getting themselves into the gentlemen's estates, were angry that they found not themselves in the same esteem and reputation with those whose estates they had, and therefore, with more industry than the other, studied all ways to make themselves considerable. These, from the beginning, were fast friends to the Parliament, and many of them were now intrusted by them as deputy-lieutenants in their new ordinance of the militia, and having found the people were ripe, gathered them together." *

This is an important passage to illustrate the

* Clarendon's Hist., vol. ii. part i. p. 5.

influence of the middle class, and of public opinion, in those days. It shows that a new order of men was in existence, and had possession of many of the estates which had by that time been sold in consequence of the law for cutting off entails, to which allusion has been made. These persons, who might in the present day be placed in the upper division of the middle class, were at that time rapidly augmenting in numbers; and being, from the absurd notions then prevalent, deprived of that consideration in the state, or with the government, to which from their property they were justly entitled, felt inclined to be hostile to the King, and friendly to the Parliament.

Thus we see how great a change had been effected within two hundred years. The class of persons to whom Lord Clarendon alludes were deprived of what may be styled the legitimate influence of property, and were not thought, by King Charles and his advisers, fit to be trusted with the slightest power; so that, in those days, it was not property alone that formed a particular class. How different the case is in the present time needs not be mentioned.

Persons of this description, who, having realised and augmented their property by their own exertions, would in the present day rank in the upper part of the middle class, and who are among the firmest supporters of the Constitution and the House of Brunswick, were precisely those who, during the

Revolution and civil war, exercised their influence against the monarch, and in favour of the Parliament. The lower class, like all lower classes in former times, had no fixed opinion, and were easily turned to one side or the other. If left to themselves, they might have been favourable to the royal cause; and yet, with no great difficulty, they were induced to act against it. The upper class was divided, part for the King, and the remainder for the Parliament; had it been otherwise, Charles could not have made so long a resistance as he did to the parliamentary forces, as nearly the whole of the middle class was against him. Public opinion may be said to have been decidedly adverse to the royal cause during the whole contest, and it was not until the illegal acts of the Long Parliament, the usurpation of the army, and the tragical end of Charles, that the public sentiment turned in his favour. The desire of the well-informed at that time was to establish a constitution nearly resembling that which was obtained at a subsequent period. Public opinion determined to set limits to the extent of the prerogative; in short, to obtain what was secured at the accession of the Houses of Nassau and Brunswick. A late writer on the events of the commonwealth in England says,—"'The day that saw Charles perish on the scaffold, rendered the restoration of his family certain."

The following verses of Andrew Marvell, a staunch republican, and some time secretary to

Oliver Cromwell, evince the commiseration excited even in his breast by the execution of Charles; and his sentiments were probably participated by his class, and responded to by the nation.

> "While round the armèd bands
> Did clap their bloody hands,
> He nothing common did or mean,
> Upon that memorable scene;
> But with his keener eye
> The axe's edge did try;
> Nor called the gods, with vulgar spite,
> To vindicate his helpless right,
> But bow'd his comely head
> Down, as upon a bed."

This compassion, excited in the nation by the tragical end of Charles I., was certainly very serviceable to the royal cause, particularly when the people discovered that they had transplanted despotism from royalty to an usurper: they imagined that the arbitrary power of the sovereign was preferable to the despotic sway of Cromwell and the army.

From the first resistance of the Parliament to the King's authority, until the restoration of Charles II., the several parties that desired a protectorate, a republican form of government, or a monarchy, were so equally balanced, that public opinion was not sufficiently decided to outweigh the power of the army, by whose agency it must be recollected the King was led to the scaffold, and his son placed on the throne. There can be no doubt, however,

that public opinion was more unanimous for the restoration than it had been for the destruction of the monarchy; in the latter case, therefore, the army seems to have been more supported by that sentiment.

It may be said, if public opinion was adverse to the destruction of the monarch, how came that catastrophe to take place, and by whose authority was it perpetrated? The answer seems to be, that Cromwell by the assistance of the army had usurped an entire power over the nation, and that public opinion was kept down by an armed force. Those classes which influence public opinion were not so numerous formerly as at present; they certainly were not so in the time of Charles I. They acted not merely by themselves, but by means of the lower class; and if their influence was not paramount, it might have been sufficient to agitate the lower class, and set it in action, without the means of restraining it according to their will at any subsequent time. A number of men may unite together, and move a rock, so as to roll it down a declivity; but if their numbers or power be not great, and if the declivity be steep, it may roll on without check or control, and carry destruction and devastation in its course. In a similar manner the lower class, in a state advanced in civilisation, can of itself scarcely move to any purpose; but if set in motion by the influence of the upper and middle classes, and, perhaps, of the latter alone, a dangerous impetus may

be given: should this happen, unless the other two classes are numerous, (in this case, the aggregate of numbers in the middle class makes wealth, and, consequently, influence and power,) a revolution may end in a military government. Such was the case at this time of our history, as well as in France at a later period.

Let us now show the support given to the Parliament against Charles, by public opinion.

"They (the Parliament) had not only their garrisons in Warwick, Coventry, and Banbury, within distance, but all that country so devoted to them, that they had all provisions brought to them without the least trouble; whereas, on the other side, the people were so disaffected to the King's party, that they had carried away or hid all their provisions, insomuch that there was neither meat for man or horse; and the very smiths hid themselves, that they might not be compelled to shoe horses, of which, in those stony ways, there was great need." *

Another instance: "The parliament, on the other hand, assured themselves, that the nation was entirely theirs." †

Again, when Charles was compelled to abandon the siege of Gloucester on the appearance of the parliamentary forces, "The Earl of Essex stayed in that joyful town, where he was received with all possible demonstrations of honour, three days; and,

* Clarendon, vol. ii. part i. p. 67. † Ibid. p. 98.

in that time, which was as wonderful as any part of the story, caused all necessary provisions to be brought into them, out of those very quarters in which the King's army had been sustained, and which they conceived to be entirely spent, so solicitous were the people to conceal what they had, and to reserve it for them."*

One thing is worthy of remark, as it shows the state of public opinion: although parts of the country were in favour of Charles, almost all the towns, in which the middle classes were chiefly to be found, appeared hostile to the royal cause. As this seems to have been generally the case, it serves to confirm the statement already made, that more information, and more of a middle class, was to be found in towns than in the country, and that public opinion, therefore, was more powerful in the former than in the latter.

When first the divisions took place, and recourse was had to arms, part of the nobility and of the principal gentry, (who at that time composed the upper class, not, as in the present day, formed entirely by the comparative wealth of the individuals, but then established according to their titles or pedigree,) and their retainers, were in general on the King's side. At first their discipline and courage obtained the victory in despite of numbers; but at length that occurred which generally takes place in a contest between regular troops

* Clarendon, vol. ii. part i. p. 517.

and a population if supported by public opinion, and protracted for a length of time — the population, by degrees, acquire discipline and the art of war from those who have beaten them; and that side is most likely to prevail which is possessed of the greatest pecuniary resources and the greatest number of troops.

"The courage and resolution of those few (the King's troops) were such, and the cowardice of the undisciplined seditious rabble and their leaders so eminent," says Clarendon, "that on the first breaking out of the war the victory usually remained decided for the royalists."

Now admitting this statement to be correct, of which there is little doubt, it follows that the influence of public opinion must have been not altogether inconsiderable, to enable the people, under such disadvantages, not only to contend with, but ultimately to triumph over, such a force.

When Charles presented himself before Gloucester, Coventry, and other towns, which were under no control, and might have sided with either party, the manner in which he was treated shows the sentiments of the population:—"We, the inhabitants, magistrates, &c., within this garrison of Gloucester, unto his Majesty's gracious message, return this humble answer,—That we do keep this city, according to our oaths and allegiance, to and for the use of his Majesty and his royal posterity; and do accordingly conceive ourselves wholly bound

to obey the commands of his Majesty, *signified by both Houses of Parliament*, and are resolved, by God's help, to keep this city accordingly."*

This extraordinary answer of the citizens of Gloucester to Charles's requisition, is cited to show the feeling then entertained by the middle classes in towns. They evidently were resolved to obey no other than a constitutional government. They were not republicans: the authority of the King and his "royal posterity" was fully recognized; but they would not obey it apart from the concurrence of the other two branches of the legislature.

Shortly after the King left Nottingham, "he was compelled in all places as he passed to borrow arms from the trained bands, which was done with much wariness and caution, albeit it was known that those arms would, being left in those hands, be employed against him, or, at least, be of no use to him."†

The conduct of the population subsequently to the battle at Edgehill, between the troops of Parliament and those of the King, evinces the feeling in the neighbourhood:—"He (the Earl of Essex, the general of Parliament) caused all manner of provisions, with which the country supplied him plentifully, to be brought thither to them for their refreshments. In the other army, a very cold night was spent in the field, without any refreshment

* Clarendon's Hist., vol. ii. p. 474.

† Ibid. p. 59.

of victuals, or provision for the soldiers, for the country was so disaffected that it not only not sent in provisions, but the King's soldiers who straggled into the villages, were knocked on the head by the common people."* "The army under the Earl of Essex was not only drawn together, but all the trained bands of London led out in their brightest equipage upon the heath, next Brentford, where they had indeed a full army of horse and foot, fit to have decided the title to the crown with an equal adversary. The view and prospect of this strength, which nothing but that sudden exigent could have brought together, extremely puffed them up, not only as it was ample security against the present danger, but as it looked like a safe power to encounter any other. They had now before their eyes the King's little handful of men."†

Again, speaking of the town of Marlborough, which part of the King's forces were about to invest,—"Besides the garrison, it being market-day, very many country people came thither to buy and sell, and were all compelled to stay and take arms for the defence of the place; which, for the most part, they were willing to do, and the people peremptory to defend it."‡

Speaking of Parliament,—"For how great soever the compliance of the nation seemed with them

* Clarendon, vol. ii. p. 74. † Ibid. p. 111.
‡ Ibid. p. 122.

from the city or the country, they well enough discerned that compliance was generally upon the hope and expectation of procuring a speedy peace." *

"The town of Manchester had, from the beginning, out of that factious humour which possessed most corporations, and the pride of their wealth, opposed the King, and declared magisterially for the Parliament." Again, "In truth it is hardly credible what quantities (besides the provisions made in the regular way by the commissioners) of excellent victuals, ready dressed, were every day sent in waggons and carts from London to the army (of Parliament) upon the voluntary contributions from private families, according to their affections to the work in hand." †

Instances need not be multiplied to prove that during the civil war the cause of the Parliament was espoused, and warmly supported, by all those who had of late years obtained property, and who formed the greater portion of the middle class at the time; yet public opinion was then unable to carry the point without a severe struggle with the sovereign, whose cause was chiefly supported by the upper class and their retainers. How much both parties relied on the public, and how anxious each was to conciliate it during the continuance of the civil war, appears from the vast number of pamphlets and addresses from both

* Clarendon, vol. ii. p. 174. † Ibid. p. 217.

parties published and and distributed at the time, as we have already observed. *

Much apprehension was entertained by the Protector's council, from the publication of the Ikon Basilike, after the execution of Charles the First. Fully sensible how important it was to counteract the influence of that book, the pen of Milton, our great poet, was brought into use. He published, in reply to the Ikon Basilike, the Ikonoclastes, which in its turn drew a host of controversialists on Milton. This controversy, though of little moment in itself, is alluded to here to exhibit the apprehension that the existing government, even with all its power, entertained from the re-action of public feeling in 1649.

We give a short extract from Milton, with some comments of a Dr. Perenchief, (one of the late King's chaplains,) and the remarks of Dr. Symmons on both.

It may be here observed, that Milton exercised his powerful pen to persuade the nation that the abolition of the monarchy was beneficial. The King's chaplain answered him: the manner of the parties indicates the coarseness prevalent at that period.

The controversy, however, confirms our position that public opinion was the arbiter of the contest.

" To descant on the misfortunes of a person fallen

* Between forty and fifty thousand, as appears in the British Museum.

from so high a dignity, who hath also payd his finall debt both to nature and his faults, is neither of itselfe a thing commendable, nor the intention of this discourse. Neither was it fond ambition, or the vanity to get a name present or with posterity, by writing against a king: I never was so thirsty after fame, nor so destitute of other hopes and means, better and more certain to attaine it. For kings have gained glorious titles from their favorers by writing against private men, as Henry VIII. did against Luther; but no man ever gained much honor by writing against a king, as not usually meeting with that force of argument in such courtly antagonists, which to convince might add to his reputation." *

Such is the violence of Milton's republican scorn, which we think does not much become a poet; on the other hand, his adversaries carried their feelings to an equally absurd extreme. "But," says Perenchief, denouncing the opposers of royalty, "their fury became ridiculous. While they thought by their present power to corrupt the King's memory, and take off the admiration of the following ages, the more they hindered the publication (the Ikon Basilike) the more earnestly it was sought after. Yet they endeavoured in another way, and therefore hired certain mercenary souls to despoil the King of being the author of it. Especially one

* John Milton's Ikonoclastes, Preface. London, 1649.

base scribe*, naturally fitted to compose satires and invent reproaches, who made himself notorious by some licentious and infamous pamphlets, and so approved as fit for their service. This man they encouraged (by translating him from a needy pedagogue to the office of secretary) to write that scandalous book (Ikonoclastes), an invective against the King's meditations, and to answer the learned Salmasius his defence of Charles the First." †

How vain and futile, in general, are party invectives and political squabbles! Posterity treats them with equal-handed justice. The writings of Perenchief are forgotten; Milton's poetic genius lives fresh in our memory.

We will now conclude the party warfare by giving a quotation from a writer who, under the garb of fairness, is as violent as the two former.

"Immediately after the death of Charles the First," says Dr. Symmons (a writer who, in defending the memory of Milton against Dr. Johnson's attack, was led into an opposite extreme, of equal intolerance), "a book with the King's name as its author, had been published, under the title of Ikon Basilike. The stroke of violence under which the King had fallen had excited very generally throughout England a sensation of sympathy, and a strong sentiment of disapprobation. He appeared to be

* John Milton, the poet!

† Life of Charles I., by R. Perenchief, D.D., one of his Majesty's chaplains, 1647.

the victim of an ambitious and sanguinary faction, and while his faults were generously buried in the grave, his virtues were seen in more than their proper size, and were admitted to more than their just share of praise. The publication, therefore, of a work professing to be by his own hand, in which he is represented in the constant intercourse of prayer with his Creator, asserting the integrity of his motives before the great Searcher of hearts, and urging an awful appeal from the injustice and cruelty of man to the justice and clemency of God, was calculated in a supreme degree to agitate every bosom in his favour, and to make every free tongue vibrate in execration of the inhumanity of his enemies.

"To counteract the consequences of this popular production, which threatened to be alarmingly great, the council determined on availing itself of the abilities of its new secretary. Convinced of the inefficacy of any of the means of power to suppress a favourite publication, it resolved to wield the only weapons adapted to a war with opinion, to wage book against book, to oppose fact with fact, and argument, wherever it could be found, with argument. It delegated therefore to Milton the task of contending with the Ikon Basilike, and submitted the merits of its cause to the arbitrement of the pen.

"The Ikonoclastes, or Image-breaker, may be regarded as one of the most perfect and powerful of

Milton's controversial compositions. Pressing closely on its antagonist, and tracing him step by step, it either exposes the fallacy of his reasoning, or the falsehood of his assertions, or the hollowness of his professions, or the convenient speciousness of his devotion. It cannot certainly be read by any man whose reason is not wholly under the dominion of prejudice, without its enforcing a conviction unfavourable to the royal party. The object of its attack is by no means strong. Separated from the cause of the monarchy and of the church of England, the cause of Charles is much more open to assault than it is susceptible of defence. If he has been lowered beneath his just level by his enemies, he has been proportionably raised above it by his friends, and with a nice regard to truth we may probably place him in the central point between Nero, to whom he has been resembled by the former, and either of the Antonines, above whom he has been advanced by the latter. His private life was not liable to censure, but his public conduct betrayed the violence of a despot, with the duplicity and equivocating morality of a follower of Loyola."*

To return: Admitting that Charles had been gifted with energy, discretion, and judgment, and that his advisers were judicious, and equal to the difficulties they had to encounter, and aware of the increase and strength of public opinion, the moderate demands at first made for a security against

* Dr. Symmons's Life of John Milton.

the prerogative of the crown would have been granted; and had this, at any period in the troubles, been conceded, there can scarcely be a doubt that the civil war and revolution would not have taken place. When, however, security of person and property could not be obtained from the sovereign, the minds of men became heated, and the result was more excessive than the moderate men or than public opinion either expected or desired. Great allowance must be made for the unfortunate monarch, and even for those whom he had called to his councils. A new order of things had arisen, and a new power, since the increase of civilisation. The King became the victim of his parents' arbitrary principles, of the bias and prejudices derived from his education, of the pernicious flatteries of his courtiers; and neither that prince, or those about his person, could have acquired any knowledge of the increase of the middle class and of public opinion.

Charles therefore should be more pitied than blamed for not being able to discover the progress of civilisation, when it escaped the sagacity of his ablest advisers. "The King and Parliament themselves carried on the controversy by messages, remonstrances, and declarations; whereas *the nation was really the party* to whom all arguments were addressed."

"In some of these declarations is found the first regular definition of the constitution, according to

our present idea of it, that occurs in any English composition, at least any published by authority. The three species of government, monarchical, aristocratical, and democratical, are thus plainly distinguished; and the English government is expressly said to be none of them pure, but all of them mixed and tempered together. This style no former king of England would have used, and no subject would have been permitted to use. Banks and the crown lawyers who argued against Hampden, in the case of ship-money, insist plainly and openly on the King's absolute and sovereign power, and the opposite lawyers do not deny it." *

By removing the Star Chamber, the King's power of binding his subjects by his proclamations was indirectly abolished; and that branch of the prerogative, the symbol of arbitrary power, and unintelligible in a limited constitution, being removed, left the system of government more consistent and uniform.

The opinion given of the situation of Charles I., and of the fanaticism that prevailed at that time in England, will be confirmed by the following passages placed together: — "It was the fate of the House of Stuart to govern England at a period when the former source of authority was already much diminished (that is, the King's prerogative), and before the latter (power of Parliament) began to flow in any tolerable abundance. Without a

* Hume.

regular and fixed foundation, the throne perpetually tottered, and the prince sat upon it anxiously and precariously. The majesty of the crown, derived from ancient powers and prerogatives, procured respect, and checked the approaches of insolent intruders; but it begat in the King so high an idea of his own rank and station, as made him incapable of stooping to popular courses, or submitting in any degree to the control of Parliament." Again of Charles I.:—"Had he been born an absolute prince, his humanity and good sense had rendered his reign happy, and his memory precious; had the limitations on the prerogative been in his time quite fixed and certain, his integrity had made him regard as sacred the boundaries of the constitution. Unhappily, his fate threw him into a period when the precedents of many former reigns savoured strongly of arbitrary power, and the *genius of the people* ran violently towards liberty." *

The influence of the Church of England was not such, at this time, as to possess sufficient authority over the people to keep down the fanatical spirit of puritanism, which became an auxiliary to the opponents of the king. "The keeping of Christmas holidays," says Whitelocke, "was long a great mark of malignancy, and was very severely censured by the Commons."

"Even minced-pies, which custom had made a

* Hume's History of England.

Christmas dish amongst the Churchmen, was regarded, during that season, as a profane and superstitious viand by the sectaries; though, at other times, it agreed very well with their stomachs. 'In the parliamentary ordinance for the observance of the sabbath, they inserted a clause for the taking down of maypoles, which they called a heathenish vanity." *

To show how much the public opinion of the nation had increased in consequence of the increase of commerce, the following may be quoted:—

" The customs before the civil wars are said to have amounted to five hundred thousand pounds a year, a sum ten times greater than the best period in Queen Elizabeth's reign." †

Cromwell's power mainly rested on the affection of the army, aided by his personal activity, prudence, and sagacity, and by the fanaticism prevalent amongst the troops. Probably an impression might be general, that if he were driven from the Protectorate, the public affairs would fall into confusion; and, after all, some other favourite of the army might replace him in his power.

The presbyterians were not then sufficiently reconciled to the family of the late King. The levellers and independents, many of whom belonged to the first division of the lower class, were powerful, and by no means desirous of restoring a

* Wood's Fasti Oxonienses, p. 740.

† Hume's History of England.

monarchical government. This part of the lower class was then considerable, and possessed some influence; the middle class, and public opinion, not having quite risen to that power possessed in later times. Thus circumstanced, the nation, aware of the strength of the army, was obliged to tolerate the usurpation of Cromwell, and to postpone its desire for the establishment of a constitution.

"After the death of the King, the outward show of supreme power was in the Parliament, but in effect it was lodged in the generals of the armies. Cromwell sent away that Parliament, and constituted a new Parliament of 144 members, most of them being fanatics and enthusiasts, amongst whom Cromwell had put a few cunning fellows, entirely devoted to his service: these, having first let them go on in their own way till they had made themselves ridiculous and hated by every body, then offered the supreme administration of affairs to Cromwell, who, to have a fair pretence to keep on foot his sea and land forces, which were the foundation of his power, began a war with the Dutch."*

During the course of the revolution and civil war, few instances occur of the spoliation of private property; nor (considering the state of affairs) does it appear that very flagrant acts of violence were committed by individuals of one class against

* Puffendorff, Introd. Hist. of Europe, sect. 29. p. 148. 8vo ed.

those of another. The upper and middle classes of society not being deprived of their property, the rights of individuals seem in general to have been respected, except of those who rendered themselves obnoxious to the ruling power. In France, during the memorable revolution, the case was different; there was scarcely any middle class in that country.

Numerous addresses, from various parts of England, were presented to Richard, the son and successor of Cromwell; and, yet, within a very short period, the people received Charles II. with universal acclamation. Whence could such a sudden change arise, or by what causes could it be effected?

The nation had felt the evils of civil discord, of military rule, and of an unsettled state of affairs.

When a dislike for, or an inability to conduct, public affairs, joined to the factious conduct of the army, had induced Richard to retire from the office of protector, there was reasonable ground to apprehend that the army would engross the entire power, and place again some favourite at the head of the state. This was equally offensive to the royalists, the presbyterians, and the republicans: all therefore might reasonably unite, the first from choice, the two others from necessity, in wishing for the restoration of the royal family. Notwithstanding the desire of the nation, and the influence of public opinion at that time in promoting the return of

Charles, it could scarcely have been effected without the concurrence of the powerful and well organised army then existing. As soon, therefore, as the army accorded with public opinion, the restoration was at once completed, and Charles had only to wonder, on his return, by what power he had been so long kept from the throne.

CHAPTER VII.

RESTORATION OF CHARLES II. AND ABDICATION OF JAMES II.

Reaction in favour of Charles II. — Oversight of the two Branches of the Legislature in not making Conditions on the Monarch's Return. — Moral Character of Charles not in his favour. — Ballads of the Day. — Increase of Public Opinion. — James II. — His Conduct not in accordance with Public Sentiment. — James's Unpopularity much increased by his conduct towards the Church of England. — James's private Character not unamiable.

THE death of Oliver Cromwell, and the total inefficiency of his son and successor, Richard, wrought a signal change in the English people. From having hated and persecuted the Stuarts, the nation became ready to prostrate itself at their feet. Charles the Second, in his continental retirement, must have been intoxicated no less with amazement than joy, at the unexpected ebullition in his favour. Deputations of lords and commoners crossed the sea to pay him homage, and to lavish their offers of service. Democracy became a bye-word of contempt; Cromwell's memory was reviled; the Royalists and Episcopalians were, as if by magic, advanced at once, and even beyond hope,

to the very pinnacle of their ambition. To excel in vituperating Cromwell, became a passport to public favour; and although among many writers of invectives against Oliver, some (such as Cowley and Evelyn) were sincere and consistent, it is impossible not to feel pity at such men as Dryden and Waller, the latter of whom, during the Protector's ascendancy, wrote a slavish panegyric on him; while the former, on Cromwell's death, endeavoured to curry favour with his son and successor by writing "Heroic Stanzas on the late Lord Protector." These great poets, however, when the Restoration had transferred to royalty the springs of patronage and emolument, enhanced their adulation of Charles the Second by virulent abuse of the object of their former adoration.

On the King objecting to Waller that his verses on Cromwell were better than those he had written about his lawful sovereign, the eulogist dexterously extricated himself from his dilemma by saying, "Your Majesty knows that poets succeed better in *fiction* than in *truth*."

But Cowley was honest in his vehemence against Oliver, which, however violent, was echoed by the populace. Public opinion had not yet acquired consistency. The requisites were deficient. As a specimen of the re-action which had taken place, we may cite the following passage:—

"What can be more extraordinarily wicked than for a person to endeavour not only to exalt himself

above, but to trample upon, all his equals and betters; to pretend freedom for all men, and under the help of that pretence to make all men his servants; to take arms against taxes of scarce two hundred thousand pounds a year, and to raise them himself to above two millions; to pretend the defence of Parliament, and violently to dissolve all even of his own calling, and almost choosing; to undertake the reformation of religion, to rob it even to the very skin, and then to expose it naked to the rage of all sects and heresies; to set up councils of rapine and courts of murder; to fight against the King under a commission for him; to draw him into his net with protestations and vows of fidelity, and when he had caught him in it, to butcher him with as little shame as conscience or humanity, in the open face of the whole world; to receive a commission for King and Parliament, to murder, as I said, the one, and destroy no less impudently the other; to fight against monarchy when he declared for it, and declare against it when he contrived for it in his own person; to abase perfidiously, and supplant ingratefully his own general first, and afterwards most of those officers who, with the loss of their honour and hazard of their souls, had lifted him up to the top of his unreasonable ambitions; to break his faith with all enemies, and with all friends equally; and to make no less frequent use of the most solemn perjuries than the looser sort of people do of customary oaths; to usurp three

kingdoms without any shadow of the least pretensions, and to govern them as unjustly as he got them; to set himself up as an idol (which we know, as St. Paul says, in itself is nothing) and make the very streets of London like the valley of Hinnom, by burning the bowels of men as a sacrifice to his Molochship; to seek to entail this usurpation upon his posterity, and with it an endless war upon the nation; and lastly, by the severest judgment of Almighty God, to die hardened, and mad; and unrepentant, with the curses of the present age, and the detestation of all to succeed?"*

This unsparing philippic was received with rapture by the nation. In a work ascribed to Lord Lyttleton are the following words:—"It will undoubtedly astonish posterity, when they find a whole nation making these sudden changes; at one time almost unanimously declaring against monarchy, and soon after, with the most unbounded flattery, soliciting the shackles of arbitrary power. It was now feared that the tide of loyalty would bear down all the former mounds of freedom; the Parliament seemed to concur in all the designs of the Court, and even to anticipate its wishes."†

The fact is, that the people were so exhausted by the turbulence and increased taxation of the Protector's government, and so disgusted by the

* Cowley's "Discourse concerning the Government of Oliver Cromwell."

† Lord Lyttleton's History, in a Series of Letters to his Son.

moroseness and fanaticism which characterised the Commonwealth, that the royal family's return was unwisely identified with a return of prosperity, cheerfulness, and tranquillity. In the transport of this anticipation, their inconsiderate joy was boundless. Charles's welcome to London was expressed with acclamations more vehement than ever greeted a Roman conqueror in his triumphant procession to the Capitol.

"Come, mighty Charles, desire of nations, come!
Come, you triumphant exile, home!
He's come; he's safe at shore; I hear the noise
Of a whole land which does at once rejoice;
I hear the united people's sacred voice.
The sea which circles us around,
Ne'er sent to land so loud a sound.
The bells and guns are scarcely heard at all;
The artificial joy's drown'd by the natural.
All England but one bonfire seems to be,
One Etna shooting flames into the sea.
With wine all rooms, with wine the conduits flow;
There is no stoic, sure, who would not now
Even some excess allow;
And grant that one wild fit of cheerful folly
Should end our twenty years of dismal melancholy." *

The people, however, before long, found that they had only lost one tyrant and got another: to a morose, fanatical usurper, had succeeded a legitimate king, who by sallies of wit masked his tendency to despotism. Gaiety, indeed, had returned; but it was gaiety hand-in-hand with profligacy. The court was audaciously shameless and irreli-

* Cowley on his Majesty's restoration.

gious; and society, in general, took its tone from the sovereign. Manners, morals, and costumes, copied from the court of France, were everywhere prevalent; and even our national literature became gallicised. Charles, who had learned nothing by adversity, which has been sometimes styled the school of princes, brought home with him from exile a determination to seize the first opportunity of pushing the royal prerogative to as intolerable an extent as it had been carried by the Tudors. Meanwhile, the country was demoralised, and public opinion enervated by luxury. To further the monarch's despotic views, a secret alliance was negotiated, in 1670, with the French king, "for the purpose of subverting the republic of Holland, with whom Charles had entered into an alliance only two years previously; of making his authority absolute in England; and of establishing once more the Romish religion in the realms of Britain: as a prelude to which, Charles was formally absolved, and received into the bosom of the Catholic church."*

Public opinion would not have tolerated such conduct had the elements for that sentiment been sufficiently spread over the nation, which was not then the case. One of its main sources of influence, — moral principle founded on pure religious faith, was deficient, and the people could not testify those sentiments which were subsequently manifested at the expulsion of the Stuart race.

* Belsham.

A mistake, or rather an oversight, was made by Parliament, in not enforcing stipulations with Charles conditional on his return. But probably the unsettled state of affairs, the danger of delay, the difficulty of fixing any specific terms, the want of union, the jealousy that existed between the leaders of several parties influential in the country, and the variety of ideas entertained on the subject, prevented any conditions whatever from being imposed on Charles's return. Parliament, moreover, was conscious that it had lost the national confidence; and perhaps a generous belief prevailed, that there was little necessity for demanding any security from the power of the crown, as the reverses experienced by Charles and his family would correct the too lofty ideas of the prerogative so disastrously entertained by his father. In thus thinking, the English community committed a grievous error.*

The nation, however, was not again to be overreached; for, twenty-eight years afterwards, an almost unanimous wish for constitutional monarchy pervaded the public. Hence the measures which (sanctioned by public opinion, then strengthened with more of the requisites for its formation) were adopted when the Prince of Orange agreed to the Bill of Rights.

* "En remontant sur le trône de son père, Charles II. laissa indécises toutes les questions de droit, qui avaient armé le Parlement contre Charles I. Non seulement c'etait un malheur, c'etait encore une faute irreparable." — *Mazure, Hist. Revol. d'Angleterre,* tom. i. Introd.

From the indolence, and gaiety, and love of ease, of Charles II., fewer inroads were made on the liberties of the people during the early part of his reign than might have expected; but if we may judge from his expressions and general conduct, it is clear that he always considered his rights and prerogative as paramount. The same observation as regards the state of public opinion, in the time of Charles II., is applicable also to the days of the Commonwealth. An increase was gradually taking place in the commerce, and consequently the wealth of the country; yet it was inconsiderable.*

During the civil wars the attention of the people was too much occupied by passing events; the issue of the contest appeared too doubtful, and the uncertain tenure of property during its continuance was unfavourable to the industry of the nation, so that no great advance could be made in civilisation. Whatever were the sentiments of the community in

* It will hardly be believed that this money (fifty thousand pounds from parliament, and ten thousand from the city) presented to the king by the parliament and the city, and charged by bills of exchange upon the richest merchants of Amsterdam, who had vast estates, could not be received in many days, although some of the principal citizens of London who came to the king, went themselves to solicit it, and had credit themselves for much greater sums. And so, at this time, his majesty was compelled, that he might not defer the voyage he so impatiently longed to make, to take bills of exchange from Amsterdam, upon their correspondents in London, for above thirty thousand pounds of the money that was assigned." — *Lord Clarendon's History*, book xvi.

favour of Charles at his restoration, it is certain that, at the close of his reign, public opinion was hostile to him. Many causes may be assigned for this change — causes originating in the monarch's private and public conduct. Since public opinion has obtained strength in this country, the moral character of princes has much influenced the feeling of the people, either in their favour or otherwise. The attempts made by the advisers of Charles, supported by his authority, to extend the bounds of the prerogative; the situation in which, by his profuseness, he was placed in relation to the monarch of France; the sale of Dunkirk; his contests with the Dutch; the omission in assembling his Parliament; and other acts which demonstrated that he was not an advocate for the national interests, all combined to influence public opinion, especially when it was imagined that he favoured popery. Added to these, was the growing jealousy of the power and ambition of the French monarch*, whose desire of conquest, and love of glory, had awakened the apprehension of the English. There is no doubt, however, that public opinion, and the improving civilisation of the people, extorted from Charles II. some concessions (the habeas corpus for example) highly favourable to liberty, and in accordance with

* The English nation began (A.D. 1674) to grow very jealous of the great successes of the King of France. The King of England was obliged to make a separate peace with Holland.— *Puffendorff's Introd. Hist. Europe*, sect. 30. p. 151.

the augmentation of the elements of civilisation throughout the country.

Still the King's prodigality and libertinism had disgusted all the sober part of the population. Respect for royalty was supplanted by contempt for Charles's person and government. He and those who surrounded him were merely a crew of dissolute revellers.

Of political dignity little was left, and the people began to contrast disadvantageously with their present state the administration of Cromwell, when, at least, our nation was respected abroad, and when no foreign fleet would have dared to show itself in the Thames, as De Ruyter, the Dutch admiral, had done in 1667, when Van Ghent, with a detachment of seventeen sail, blew up the fortifications at Sheerness, and destroyed many of the finest vessels in our navy. From this national humiliation, however, public opinion derived fresh elasticity and vigour, as a spring will rebound in proportion as it is depressed. Plots and tumults arose; the doctrine of passive obedience was openly denounced; and Charles was driven to the desperate measure of ruling without the existence of a Parliament. This arbitrary step led to the Ryehouse plot, and to the execution of Russell and Sydney as conspirators. Charles now endeavoured to become as absolute as any monarch in Christendom; but he was harassed by discontents and treasons, and stung by venomous lampoons, the popularity of which demon-

strated the new character of public opinion. Speaking of productions of this class, the celebrated John Selden says, "Though some make slight of libels, yet you may see by them how the wind sits: as, take a straw and throw it up into the air, you shall see by that which way the wind is, which you shall not do by casting up a stone. More solid things do not show the complexion of the times so well as ballads and libels."* Of the political satires just alluded to, some of the most conspicuous may be found in the "State Poems" of Andrew Marvell, the friend of Milton, and some time member of the House of Commons. The following is a specimen:

ROYAL RESOLUTIONS.

"When plate was at pawn, and fob at an ebb,
And spider might weave in bowels its web,
And stomach as empty as brain;
Then Charles, without acre,
Did swear by his Maker,
'If e'er I see England again,
I'll have a religion all of my own,
Whether Popish or Protestant shall not be known;
And if it prove troublesome, I will have none.

"'I'll have a long parliament always to friend,
And furnish my treasure as fast as I spend;
And if they will *not*, they *shall* have an end.

"'I'll have a council shall sit always still,
And give me a licence to do what I will.
* * * *

* Seldeniana.

"'My insolent brother shall bear all the sway;
If parliament murmur, I'll send him away,
And call him again as soon as I may.

"'The ancient nobility I will lay by,
And new ones create their room to supply,
And they shall raise fortunes for my own fry.

"'Some one I'll advance from a common descent,
So high that he shall hector the parliament,
And all wholesome laws for the public prevent.

"'And I will assert him to such a degree,
That all his foul treasons, tho' daring and high,
Under my hand and seal shall have indemnity.

"'I'll wholly abandon all public affairs,
And pass all my time with buffoons and players,
And saunter to Nelly when I *should* be at prayers.'"*

If the just demands of the country had been conceded by Charles I. previously to the breaking out of the civil war, they would have been gratefully received by the nation: but at the close of Charles II.'s reign civilisation had increased, and the people were not so easily satisfied. The accounts of those days agree in stating that Charles II. considered himself as above any control, and exercised his authority without attention to the welfare or the opinions of his subjects. "Although he desired to become absolute, and to overturn both our religion and our laws, yet he would neither run the risk, nor give himself the trouble which so great a design required. They that judged the most favourably of this (the Dutch war), thought

* Andrew Marvell's "State Poems."

it was done out of revenge to the Dutch, that with the assistance of so great a fleet as France could join to his own, he might be able to destroy them. But others put a worse construction on it; and thought that, seeing he could not quite master or deceive his subjects by his own strength and management, he was willing to help forward the greatness of the French at sea, that by their assistance he might more certainly subdue his own people, according to what was generally believed to have fallen from Lord Clifford, — that, if the King must be in dependence, it was better to pay it to a great and generous King, than to five hundred of his own insolent subjects." *

The influence of the prerogative may be learnt from the following passage: "It had been usual for the bankers to carry their money to the exchequer, and to advance it upon the security of the funds, by which they were afterwards reimbursed when the money was levied on the public. The bankers, by this traffic, got eight, sometimes ten per cent. for sums which either had been consigned to them without interest, or which they had borrowed at six per cent., profits which they dearly paid for by this egregious breach of public faith (the shutting up of the exchequer by Charles II., A.D. 1672). The measure was so suddenly taken, that none had warning of the danger. A general confusion prevailed in the city, followed by the ruin of many.

* Burnet's Hist., book iii. p. 614.

The bankers stopped payment; the merchants could answer no bills; distrust took place everywhere, with a stagnation of commerce, by which the public was universally affected." * Many other instances could be adduced of Charles's disregard of any thing like public opinion, which, however, was gradually gaining influence in the country, and undermining arbitrary power.

We need not trace the course of events, which would only swell in an unnecessary manner these observations, and might not place the growth of public opinion in a clearer point of view. If a metaphor may be allowed, the motion of the index of a clock is more easily noticed by marking its progress at particular points or periods on the dial, than by watching without intermission its slow and almost imperceptible advance. The civilisation of the people was gradually but decidedly extending itself, and the Protestant faith and desire for a liberal form of government were advancing, hand in hand, to bring about the change in 1688.

The expulsion of James II. is of so comparatively recent a date, and the causes which brought it about are so generally known and understood, that it will be unnecessary to dwell longer on that event, beyond the few remarks that may be desirable to trace the march of improvement over the country. The manner in which this expulsion took place, not only without bloodshed, but by the almost unanimous

* Hume's Hist., c. 64.

approbation of the people, forms a remarkable event in the history of our country. If we consider the situation of James and his government, and the power he possessed, together with the magnitude of his means of defence, it is impossible to attribute his expulsion to any other cause than the increased extension of public opinion.

The revolution of 1688 was one unexampled in the history of the world — the change of an old dynasty, without a single life being sacrificed; and this result brought about in the most peaceable and orderly manner. Such an event did not, and could not have occurred previously in any part of the world, for the simple reason that civilisation and the influence of public opinion were not sufficiently extended, previously to that time, to enable any nation to carry such a measure.

From the long period during which the Stuart race had wielded the sceptre of England, they must have secured to their dynasty a number of devoted and powerful adherents. The strength of the King's party was manifested in the prolonged though fruitless contest carried on some years previously against the Parliament, and at the restoration of Charles II.; yet this predilection for the Stuart dynasty, common in many, could not cope against the growing distrust in the nation arising from the conduct of James II.* The extraordinary advantages de-

* "King James (II.) told me, that amongst other prejudices that he had at the Protestant religion, this was one; that both

rived by the community from the events of 1688, which led to the establishment on a solid foundation of the House of Brunswick on the throne, and secured the liberties of the nation, fully justify the acts of our ancestors, and evince their wisdom and foresight.

Had James possessed more firmness and judgment, had he concealed his intentions, and shown himself more subservient to public opinion, he might perhaps have kept his throne some time longer; but he never could have maintained the despotic power exercised by the antecedent monarchs. The jealous and watchful eye of the well-informed in the community was observing his conduct, would scan his motives, and oppose his attempts, until a favourable opportunity was presented of ridding themselves of him entirely. The efforts made at this time to secure the accession of the Prince of Orange were probably greater than could have been expected from the extent of civilisation then in the country, and were probably stimulated considerably from the apprehension of losing the English Protestant Church.

Among other causes that evinced the intention of James in reference to the Church was his arbitrary and unjust conduct to Dr. Hough, the

his brother and himself, being in many companies in Paris, incognito, where they met many Protestants, he found they were all alienated from them; so he believed they were all rebels in their hearts." — *Burnet's Hist.*, vol. i. folio, p. 73.

independent president of Magdalen College, Oxford, who made so memorable a stand against the King's attempt to impose a new and more pliant head on that community. By Hough's example, the fellows were encouraged to reject his Majesty's mandamus in favour of one Anthony Farmer; and as a statutable majority concurred in electing Hough as their president, he had the spirit to defy the royal order. Soon after, the King's ecclesiastical commissioners, backed by a military force, ejected him, and he vacated the college, protesting nevertheless against the illegality of the proceeding. The fellows, however, refused to sign a submission to their new president, and accordingly twenty-five of them were immediately expelled the college with Dr. Hough, and declared incapable of being admitted to any ecclesiastical dignity or benefice. The public sympathised deeply with these victims of absolute power; but in the following year, when the declaration of the Prince of Orange was received in England, James, hoping to regain the affections of the clergy, thought it prudent to restore Magdalen College to its rights, to reinstate Dr. Hough in his presidentship, and to cancel the degradation of the fellows. The strong sentiment against James, arising from his evident desire to pull down the Protestant Church of England, evinces the religious and moral feeling prevalent in the country, and the increase of the elements of civilisation. The fear of losing the

Protestant faith influenced the people: under that impression the reign of James could not continue.

"Upon my return home," says Dr. Calamy, "I found things much altered from the state in which I left them. When I went away, all people in general, of one sort and another, were full of fears of approaching ruin. Neither they that were in the Established Church, nor they that were out of it, could see how to escape Popery and slavery if King James's reign continued."*

The victory obtained by James over the Duke of Monmouth, and the terror into which the people were thrown by the unsparing and almost indiscriminate cruelty of Jeffreys during the western circuit, encouraged the King to devise new projects against English liberty. "He (James) thought this a time favourable for carrying on his scheme of religion and arbitrary government. An attempt at arbitrary power in Charles was in some measure excusable, as he had a republican faction to oppose, and it might have been prudent, at that time, to overstep justice in order to attain security; but the same designs in James were as unnecessary as impracticable, since there were few republicans remaining, and the people were satisfied with limited monarchy. But this weak and deluded monarch was resolved to imitate one or two princes of Europe, who had just before rendered themselves absolute, and he was incited to this project by

* Diary and Life of Calamy, vol. i. p. 193.

Louis XIV., who secretly desired his destruction. Thus instigated, he began his designs with the measures which he should not have used till their completion. He sent a splendid embassy to Rome, to acknowledge his obedience to the Pope. Innocent, who then filled the chair, was too good a politican to approve those childish measures, and gave his ambassador a very cool reception. He was sensible that the King was openly striking at those laws and opinions which it was his business to undermine in silence and security. The cardinals were even heard facetiously to declare, that the King should be excommunicated for thus endeavouring to overturn the small remains of Popery that yet subsisted in England." Every member of the Church of England now saw their danger, and Whigs and Tories united their efforts to oppose the schemes of the King." *

James was naturally a humane man; it was not his private but public conduct that indisposed the nation against him. Even when he left England, he was not personally disliked; but the sympathy with his misfortunes could not for a moment counterbalance public opinion. This exemplifies strongly the advance of civilisation. In former times, a monarch of agreeable manners and amiable character might, by virtue of these qualifications alone, exert an irresponsible influence over his people. In an advanced state of civilisation, such qualities,

* Lord Lyttleton's History of England, vol. ii.

although desirable in the sovereign, do not prevent a rigid examination of his public acts.

The following anecdote exhibits James in an amiable point of view: —

"When Story, taken and imprisoned for assisting Monmouth, was ordered before the King and Privy Council of a sudden, the keeper declared his orders were to bring him immediately, which he did in a coach, without giving him time to prepare himself in any manner, only cautioning him to give a plain and direct answer to the questions the King (James II.) should put to him. When brought before the Council Chamber, he made so sad and sorrowful a figure that all present were surprised and frightened at his haggard and squalid appearance. When the King first cast his eyes upon him he cried out, 'Is that a man? or what is it?' He was told it was Story. 'Oh! Story,' says the King, 'I remember him; that is a rare fellow indeed.' Then, turning towards him, 'Pray Story,' says he, 'you were in Monmouth's army in the west, were you not?' He, according to the advice given him, made answer presently, 'Yes, an't please your Majesty.' 'Pray,' says the King to him, 'and you were a commissary there, were you not?' And he again replied, 'Yes, an't please your Majesty.' 'And you,' said he, 'made a speech before great crowds of people, did you not?' He again very readily answered, 'Yes, an't please your Majesty.' 'Pray,' says the King, 'if you haven't forgot what you said, let us

have some taste of your fine florid speech; let us have a specimen of some of the flowers of your rhetoric.' Whereupon Story told us that he readily made answer, 'I told them, an't please your Majesty, that it was you that fired the city of London.' 'A rare rogue, upon my word,' said the King; 'and pray what else did you tell them?' 'I told them,' said he, 'an't please your Majesty, that you poisoned your brother.' 'Impudence in the utmost height of it,' said the King; 'pray let us have something further, if your memory serves you.' 'I farther told them,' said Mr. Story, 'that your Majesty appeared to be fully determined to make the nation both Papists and slaves.' By this time the King seemed to have heard enough of the prisoner's speech, and therefore, crying out 'A rogue with a witness,' and cutting off short, he said, 'To all this I doubt not but a thousand other villanous things were added; but what would you say, Story, if after all this I should grant you your life?' To which he, without any demur, made answer, 'That he would pray heartily for his Majesty as long as he lived.' 'Why then,' says the King, 'I freely pardon all that is past, and hope you will not for the future represent your King as inexorable.'"*

The feeling of hostility against the King's public conduct was so violent, that it seems probable, if no Prince of Orange had been in existence, the expulsion of James would nevertheless have taken place. When

* Calamy's Diary.

this prince was driven from the throne of England, he was in every respect in a more advantageous position than his father when he raised his standard at Nottingham; yet James could make no effectual struggle against the Prince of Orange, so strongly was the latter supported by the country. The religious and political sentiments of James were viewed with apprehension, even before he ascended the throne of his brother, and the Commons House passed a bill excluding him from the succession; but this bill was rejected by the Lords with great difficulty, and after a vehement debate.

To show the advance of civilisation, and strength of public opinion, in 1688, let us imagine that in 1488, an attempt, similar to that of the Prince of Orange, and with a similar force, had been made in England; that the sovereign on the throne had possessed treasure and an armed force equal, in proportion to the times, to that of James. No shadow of doubt can exist that, as little or no public opinion was formed in 1488, the attempt to dispossess the reigning sovereign would have been abortive. The voice of the people in 1488 was of no moment; there was no middle class of any influence; James II., had he lived in those days, would have been esteemed by the barons and courtiers as an excellent monarch; and the ignorant and barbarous lower class would have been blinded by superstition and influenced by their superiors. The same result must have followed in 1588; though in

1585, Henry VII. overcame Richard and ascended the throne; but this event arose from the victory gained over the latter, not from any sentiment in the people, then divided into the factions of the Roses.

From the conduct of James when the Prince of Orange landed, it appears that that monarch, like his father, was wholly ignorant of the existence of public opinion. The repugnance of the people to his measures he attributed to a factious spirit, which he was determined to suppress. "The king of France," says Burnet, "when he gave the king (James II.) advertisements of the preparations in Holland, offered him such a force as he should call for. Twelve or fifteen thousand men were named, or as many more as he should desire. It was proposed that they should land at Portsmouth, and that they should have that place to keep the communication with France open, and in their hands. All the priests were for this. The Earl of Sunderland was the only man in credit that opposed it. He said the offer of an army of forty thousand men, might be a real strength; but then it would depend on the orders that came from France: they might perhaps master England; but they would become the King's masters at the same time; so that he must govern under such orders as they should give; and thus he would quickly become only the viceroy to the King of France: any army less than that would lose the King the affections of his peo-

ple, and drive his own army to desertion if not to mutiny." * The next passage states: "The King did not think matters were got so near a crisis: so he did neither entertain the proposition, nor let it fall quite to the ground; and all came in conclusion under one of the strangest catastrophes that is in any history. A great king, with strong armies, and mighty fleets, a vast treasure and powerful allies, fell at once; and his whole strength, like a spider's web, was so irrecoverably broken with a touch, that he was never able to retrieve, what for want both of judgment and heart he threw up in a day. Such an unexpected revolution deserves to be well opened." †

Would it be possible to attribute this change to any other cause than the influence of public opinion over men's minds, and the extent and power of civilisation, by which the community were actuated at this time? ‡

* Burnet's Hist., book iv. p. 768. † Ibid, p. 617.

‡ Since this was written (1828), a similar event has taken place in 1830 in France.

CHAPTER VIII.

ACCESSION OF THE PRINCE OF ORANGE.

Little Liberty in England previously to the Revolution in 1688. — The greatest Instance of the Influence of Public Opinion that had hitherto been manifested in the civilised part of the World. — William not popular in his Manners, and a Jealousy of Foreigners entertained. — The Prince of Orange supported by nearly all Classes, even the Officials of James. — William's Desire to become absolute. — He is frustrated by Public Opinion. — Jealousy of the French King entertained by the Nation in consequence of his Acknowledgment of the Pretender as King of England.

After the events of 1688, our constitution in England was rendered secure. Liberty was enjoyed; commerce and manufactures flourished; and the people of Great Britain were enabled to retain a regal form of government, and also to possess that freedom of speech and action, that security of person and property, and that independence, so essential to a civilised people, and as yet so seldom found and so little understood in other countries.

Ever since this period, England has been governed by a legislative and executive power, founded in a great measure on public opinion.

It is true Parliament had long been in existence: but the power of the prerogative was not only ill defined and little understood, but by the servility

of the crown lawyers, as in the well-known instance of ship money, had often been turned to purposes of oppression.

On his first landing in England, and even on his arrival at Exeter, the Prince of Orange was not so warmly received as might have been anticipated, considering the existing character of public sentiment. This apparent apathy arose chiefly from the terror created in the people by the tragical end of Monmouth's attempt, and the cruelty of Jeffreys; but, as the Prince was told, there was some difficulty who should run the hazard of being the first; but if the ice were once broken they would be as much afraid of being the last, as proved to be the case; for immediately after this remark to the Prince, news came that Cheshire had espoused the cause. The governor of Plymouth declared openly for the Prince; York, Derby, Nottinghamshire — all the counties were in arms against James; and, in addition to the favourable symptoms, disaffection to James, and good-will to the Prince of Orange, were rapidly spreading throughout the royal army." *

The army, therefore, and the middle class declared in favour of William and of the constitution. The same remark will apply to Scotland; though in the remote and mountainous parts of that country, where civilisation had not spread itself, — where little information, and scarcely a middle class could be found, the lower class, under the entire

* Burnet's Hist., vol. iii. p. 331.

control or influence of their chiefs, or of the great proprietors of land, declared for the exiled family. But in those places where, by facility of communication, and by trade or commerce, a middle class was formed, and some information spread among the people, there the desire for a constitutional government was evident, and there the Revolution of 1688 was supported.

William III. personally did not possess qualities necessary for obtaining popularity. Such qualities might have been of service to him on his arrival in this country; but, as previously observed, their possession is in general of little use to the sovereign of a free people, who is supported by public opinion. On the contrary, in despotic governments, where the monarch engrosses the entire power of the state, and therefore depends on his army, and on the good-will of a few, popularity of manners may probably conciliate those about him, and, causing the fetters of slavery to sit lightly on those by whom they are witnessed, are highly important. "He (the Prince of Orange) could not bring himself to comply enough with the temper of the English; his coldness and slowness being very contrary to the genius of the nation."*

Whatever regard, therefore, was evinced by the nation for William, could not arise from personal love of a prince with whom the people, except in name, were totally unacquainted. Besides his re-

* Burnet's Hist. book iv.

served and unbending temper, he was a foreigner, scarcely acquainted with the language or manners of the English, who at that period were more averse from foreigners, and more jealous of their interference in the affairs of the government, than any other nation in Europe.*

When the Prince of Orange landed in England, he was not accompanied by a sufficiently numerous army to withstand the forces of James in the field, much less was he able to encounter the opposition of the people, had such been manifested. No party joined him either from dread of his power or affection to his person; nor could any apprehension arise to prevent the people from remaining passive. On the contrary, they had nothing to fear from not having joined him, if he was ultimately successful; and every thing to dread in case the reverse happened. At this time, James II. had a numerous and well-disciplined army, and was in every respect more powerful than his father Charles I. had been, when he raised his standard against parliament; yet it

* The jealousy of the English towards foreigners in those days, is evident from the several acts of parliament passed for their exclusion. In fact, where a constitution and a popular representation exist, an individual may obtain a considerable share of political influence; and public opinion, in that case, entertains more jealousy of foreign interference than is felt by a despotic government: this seems the case in most states of Europe. In free states, few foreigners are ever admitted into a share of the government; in despotic states, they are not excluded, but on the contrary often employed.

was impossible for James to make an effectual struggle (even if his mind had been equal to the purpose) against the general feeling of the country. This circumstance alone shows how much public opinion had increased within half a century.

Although the people of England, to secure their liberty and preserve their religion, had driven James from the throne of his ancestors, and, with equal foresight and judgment, appointed another in place of the former sovereign, yet William himself, though called by this feeling, seems scarcely to have been aware of that power which had seated him on the throne. It is remarked that, "William, upon accepting the crown, was resolved to preserve as much as he was able the privileges of a sovereign. He was, as yet, entirely unacquainted with the nature of a limited monarchy, which was not then thoroughly understood in any part of Europe, except in England. He therefore often controverted the views of his Parliament, and was directed by arbitrary counsels. Bills thus rejected by him lay dormant for another session, and being again brought in, the King found himself obliged, though reluctantly, to comply. The same opposition and the same success attended a bill for regulating trials in cases of high treason, by which the accused were allowed a copy of the indictment and a list of the names of the jury two days before trial. He at last was willing to admit all the restraints Parliament chose to lay on the royal prerogative in

England, upon condition of being properly supplied with the means of humbling the power of France. War and foreign politics were all he knew, or desired to understand."* Here we again perceive the influence of public opinion, which was resolved to establish a free constitution, equally secure from absolute power and republicanism†, and at the same time to preserve England from the danger of invasion, and of the House of Stuart, which still held many adherents in the kingdom.

Thus, when the prerogative was defined, and circumscribed within just bounds, and the liberty of the subject confirmed by the establishment of the constitution, people of every class lost all apprehension of their rights or properties being endangered from the regal power, and then commenced that genuine loyalty which may naturally be expected to arise in a free people, who look up to their monarch as their chief magistrate, enforcing the due execution of the laws. This feeling has increased since the accession of the House of Brunswick.

Public opinion, now satisfied at home, directed its attention elsewhere. The educated and well-disposed part of the community became apprehensive of losing their form of government, from the

* Lord Lyttleton's History of England, vol. ii.

† "The republican party in England dates its origin from the early campaigns of the civil war, and did not become wholly extinct till the revolution in 1688."—*Hist. of the Commonwealth*, vol. i. p. 6.

ambition of a foreign potentate, assisted by a few discontented individuals at home. Alluding to this circumstance, an historian of those days says: "A reign that drew upon it an universal expectation of great things to follow, from such auspicious beginnings; and from so general a joy as was spread over these nations, and all the neighbouring kingdoms and states, of whom some had apprehended a general depression, if not the total ruin of the Protestant religion; and all of them saw such a progress made by the French in the design of enslaving the rest of Europe, that the check which the revolution in England seemed to promise, put a new life in those, who before were sunk in despair.* The same writer, speaking of the acknowledgment by the French monarch of the son of James II. as King of England, adds, "This gave a universal distaste to the whole English nation; all people seemed possessed with a high indignation upon it, to see a foreign potentate professing to be at peace with us, and at the same time declaring who ought to be our king: even those who were perhaps secretly well pleased with it, were yet, as it were, forced, for their own safety, to comply with the general sense of the rest in this matter." † Such at this time were the feelings of the people, which occasioned some acts to be passed, and some sentiments not of a pacific nature to be entertained in the country.

* Burnet's Hist., book v. p. 2.

† Id. book vi. p. 294.

Had not public opinion acquired strength after the Revolution, there can be little doubt that James II. would have been restored. Intrigues against the government of William were carried on with the Court of St. Germain, in which the actors were personages of high political influence, such as Marlborough, Shrewsbury, Halifax, Sunderland, Godolphin, Russel, Monmouth, &c. "The most easy and obvious mode of accounting for the prevalence of a conduct so treacherous, is the extreme apprehension which appears to have been almost universally entertained of the eventual restoration of the late king. For the extraordinary political revolutions which had taken place in the course of the last half century,—the dethronement and death of King Charles I.—the establishment of a commonwealth, with its sudden subversion—the consequent restoration of King Charles II.—the deposition and expulsion of James, and the surprising advancement of the Prince of Orange to the crown, made the re-establishment of the late king appear incomparably more feasible to the contemporary actors than it is now easy to credit or conceive—supported as, it must ever be remembered, James at this period was, by the mighty and, as imagined by many, the irresistible power of France." *

Even the friends of James found the only chance of his restoration consisted in an avowal on his part

* Belsham.

of principles in accordance with the national sentiment. A remarkable paper was seized at Barking in Essex, in a vessel that was carrying Lord Preston and some other Jacobites to France. This document was styled "Result of a Conference between some lords and gentlemen, both Tories and Whigs, respecting the restoration of King James, *without endangering the Protestant religion and civil administration according to the laws of this kingdom.*" Nothing could have been more absurd than this. The political and religious principles of the exiled monarch were clearly incompatible with the new form which the English constitution had assumed. To confide to *his* hands the guidance of a constitution such as ours then was, must, to say the least, have endangered its integrity. Aware of the difficulty of conciliating public opinion, his advisers drew up their manifesto, for the consideration of James, in a high strain of liberty, which, had it reached him, must have startled the ex-sovereign in his little court at St. Germain. The following is an extract from this paper: — "The natural wealth and power of these kingdoms being in the hands of the Protestants, the king may think of nothing short of a Protestant administration, nor of nothing more for the Catholics than a legal liberty of conscience. He may reign a Catholic in devotion, *but he must reign a Protestant in government.* He must give us a model of this at St. Germain, by preferring the Protestants that are with him above the Catholics."

Two years afterwards, James himself was induced to avow similar principles. Previously to his defeat at the battle of La Hogue, he had issued a Declaration so imperious as to give umbrage even to some of his own party. He now (1693) promulgated one of a different character, in which he professes that the people "might depend upon everything that *their own representatives should offer to make them happy; it being his noblest aim to do more for the constitution than the most renowned of his ancestors; and in his opinion his chiefest interest consisted in leaving no umbrage for jealousy in relation to religion, liberty, and property.*" Thus, for the first time, did a Stuart enunciate constitutional doctrines. To what, but the now recognised influence of public opinion, could this attributed?"

It was this sentiment that encouraged William, and supported Queen Anne for a considerable time in prosecuting the war against France. When the numerous population of that kingdom, the martial spirit of the people, and the well-known ambition of their monarch, at that period, are taken into account, the eagerness of the English nation in supporting the government to carry on the war, and the interest that the people took in the achievements of the allies in Flanders, can easily be imagined.

CHAPTER IX.

QUEEN ANNE.

Constitutional Speech of Queen Anne. — Jacobite Party. — Public Spirit of the English People. — Peace of Utrecht. — Letter from the States General to Queen Anne. — Bishop Burnet's Interview with the Queen. — State of Affairs previously to the Peace. — Political Animosities. — Jacobite Conspiracy in Anne's Court. — Lord Bolingbroke. — Public Opinion in favour of the House of Hanover. — The Queen herself desirous of her Brother's Succession. — Jacobite Documents. — Hope entertained by the Pretender's Party on the Death of Anne.

QUEEN ANNE'S first speech* "expressed great respect for the memory of the late king, in whose steps she intended to go for preserving both Church and State, in opposition to the growing power of France."

The exiled Stuarts resided at no great distance, under the immediate care and avowed protection of the French monarch. A constant correspondence was still kept up between them and the disaffected throughout Great Britain. Many individuals, although adverse to the former conduct, and apprehensive of the tyranny and bigoted principles of James II., yet fancied he was the legitimate monarch,

* Burnet's Hist., book vii. art. 1.

felt interested in his calamities, and pitied the situation and bereavement of his children, who adhered to his fortunes. It was a natural endeavour of the English people, sensible of their situation, jealous of their independence, and of their religion, to act in such a manner as to secure themselves from danger of invasion, and from having a banished prince placed on the throne by foreign bayonets.

When the victories gained by the allies had lessened the power, and consequently diminished all apprehension from the ambition, of Louis XIV., the voice of public opinion in England was not in favour of the continuance of hostilities. The success of the armies under Marlborough and Prince Eugene had been such as to diminish considerably the fear of invasion. The result was the peace of Utrecht. All the accounts of the proceedings at this period show the contest that took place between the war faction and the peace party, the former supported by the Duke of Marlborough, the House of Lords, and the bench of Bishops*; the other party by the Court, the House of Commons, and public opinion. "The votes were carried by a great majority, and were looked on as strange preludes to a peace. When the States General heard what exceptions were taken to the barrier treaty, they wrote a very respectful letter to the Queen, setting forth their just claim to and the necessity of the barrier for the security of England as well as of

* Swift.

Holland, concluding that, if there were some articles which, without affecting the essentials of the treaty, might be thought to want explanation, her Majesty should find them willing and ready to treat thereupon. How much soever disinterested people might be affected with this letter, it made no impression, and the managers of the House of Commons got all their votes to be digested in a well-composed flaming representation." *

It would be unnecessary to quote further from the chronicles of Queen Anne's reign for examples to show how much public opinion had influence in forwarding the treaty of peace with France, which by most writers has been attributed to the change of sentiment in the sovereign influenced by some favourites. It may, however, be remarked, that although the feeling of the country was in favour of peace, yet the treaty with France was concluded with so much precipitation and inattention to the interests of Britain, and of the allies, as to give the opponents of the ministry just cause of complaint, in which the nation joined, and for which at a subsequent day the negotiators were punished.

Bishop Burnet (vol. ii. p. 582.) says, "Among others the Queen spoke to myself. She said she hoped bishops would not be against peace. I said a good peace was what we prayed daily for, but the preliminaries gave no hopes of such a one,

* Rapin's Hist. book xvi.

and the trusting to the King of France's faith, after all that had passed, would seem a strange thing. She said we should have a peace on such a bottom that we should not at all rely on the King of France's word, but we ought to suspend our opinions till she acquainted us with the whole matter. I asked leave to speak my mind plainly, which she granted: I said any treaty by which Spain and the West Indies were left to King Philip must in a little while deliver up all Europe into the hands of France, and if such peace should be made, she was betrayed and we were all ruined. In less than three years' time she would be murdered, and the fires be again raised in Smithfield: I pursued this long, till I saw she grew uneasy; so I withdrew."

"On the guilt of the former administration in transacting the peace of Utrecht, I have already expressed no unqualified opinion. Waiving their intercourse with the Pretender, which there was not sufficient evidence to prove, the stress of the accusation for treason lay in their seeking to obtain Tournay for the French." * The legislature had no longer the sanction of public opinion for levying the heavy taxes necessary to continue the war, and it was not in the power of either the sovereign or of any government. But neither the number nor the noise of addresses which during the remainder of the year (1712) were presented to the Queen in

* Lord Mahon's Hist. of England, vol. i. p. 4,

favour of peace, were able to suppress the murmurings of the party, who did not like the terms of peace contained in the Queen's speech." *

Lord Oxford to Queen Anne, 8th June, 1714, giving an account of the state of affairs previously to the peace, says:

"I beg leave to touch some few heads: the army was in the field, no money in the Treasury; none of the remitters would contract again; the Bank refused to lend a hundred thousand pounds to Lord Godolphin, on very good security; the navy and other branches of the service eleven millions in debt, which enhanced the price of every thing proportionably; the civil list in debt about six hundred thousand pounds, and the yearly income too little for the current certain expense, by the lowest computation, one hundred and twenty-four thousand four hundred and ninety-five pounds."

Again, he says (which shows the little interference, however, of Parliament in that day,) —

"The 4th June, 1711, three days after the Treasurer was sworn, he was surprised with a demand of twenty-eight thousand thirty-six pounds, for arms and merchandise for Canada. Since the return from that expedition the secret is discovered, and the Treasurer's suspicions justified, for the public was cheated of above twenty thousand pounds. The Treasurer was forced to use all his

* Rapin's Hist. vol. iv.

skill and credit to keep the House of Commons from examining the affair last parliament."

During the reign of Anne, and particularly at its close, political parties were strong. The appellations of Whig and Tory continued in use. Some idea may be formed of the political animosities which then agitated the nation from the acrimonious pamphlets and other controversial writings so common at that period.*

The trial of Sacheverell, and the unusual interest it excited, show in a striking point of view the state of public feeling. A cry was set up that the Church was in danger. The lower class, instigated by popular clamour, imagined that danger to the constitution, and to their liberty, was incurred by any modification of the laws concerning religion, or any further acts of toleration.

It can be proved beyond a doubt, that a conspiracy existed amongst some of the leading members of Queen Anne's Government to place the family of the exiled sovereign on the throne of England; and this desire in them was probably participated by Anne herself, who, though adverse to the Roman Catholic doctrines supported by her father's family, probably entertained a sentiment of affection for her near relatives, and some sort of compunction at having assisted in driving her father from his throne.

The ministry of Queen Anne, selected near the

* The various pamphlets and discussions that took place need not be repeated here. See Swift, Lord Bolingbroke, and writers on the other side.

conclusion of her reign, were certainly not hostile to the Pretender. The conduct of Lord Bolingbroke, his well-known want of principle, his impeachment, his flight, and his entering almost immediately after into the service of the Pretender, justify such a supposition; but no doubt can be entertained that the plots or machinations of any party could not then have brought forward the Stuarts, — so decidedly hostile was public opinion to the known principles of that family, and to their conduct whilst on the throne.

Besides, the tide of public sentiment ran too strongly in favour of the House of Hanover, who may be said to have been seated on the throne of Britain by the unanimous voice of the Protestant population, in opposition to the Court party and several of the ministers. The state of the public mind and of parties at this period will appear from certain documents which we will quote. Queen Anne was a staunch Protestant, but, as already said, inclined from her near connexion with James and his sons to desire that they should succeed her on the throne; her ministers were most of them persons of no principle, ready and willing to support and make terms with the exiled family, if by so doing they could advance themselves. How did it happen that under such powerful influence the bigoted monarch could not succeed? Simply because public opinion, though not so powerful as at present, was in favour of

the reformed religion and of a constitutional government, and carried the day, as in 1688.

A few extracts from original letters, biographies, and historians, will place the question in its proper light:—In an epistle from Anne to her step-mother, the Queen of James II., now in the British Museum, are the following words:—"I hear the happy news of a reconcilement, and as I am confident the Prince (George of Denmark) did not leave the King with any other design than to use all possible means for his preservation, so I hope you will do me the justice to believe that I am incapable of following him for any other end. I see the general falling off of the nobility and gentry, who avow to have no other end but to prevail on the King to secure their religion, which they saw so much in danger, by the violent counsels of the priests, who, to promote their own religion, did not care to what dangers they exposed the King."

"When the Queen returned an answer to the address of the Parliament against the Pretender, in which she declined offering a reward for apprehending him, the hopes of his friends became so elated that they applied for the arrears of the dowry of 50,000*l.* per annum, since the death of James II. Although no notice was taken of this singular demand, yet, pursuant to a private agreement made in France by Lord Bolingbroke, about 50,000*l.* were remitted thither for the use of James's wife, no inconsiderable proof that Queen Anne, who must

have been privy to the transaction, was not much more a well-wisher to the Protestant succession than Bolingbroke, who, as we see before, was suspected on weaker grounds."* "Just as before, we found Bolingbroke committing his treasons with the Pretender in connivance with the Queen."† "Our Court sent to Hanover to assure the Elector that the Queen would take especial care to have the succession to the Crown secured to his family by the treaty that was to be opened. *This made little impression on the Elector.* The messenger staid there a few days, and brought an answer from the Elector in writing: yet the Elector apprehended, not without reason, that it might be stifled, therefore he ordered his minister to give a full memorial to the same purpose, of which our Court took no notice; but the memorial was translated and printed here, to the great satisfaction of all those who were afraid of the ill designs that might be hid under the pretence of the treaty (with France) then proposed."‡

A zealous Jacobite, bringing up an address from the county of Edinburgh to Queen Anne, was answered by the Queen, that she did not doubt his affection to her person, and hoped that he would not concur in any design to bring over the Prince of Hanover during her life-time. Much surprised at this sudden mark of confidence, "I told her," says

* Goldsmith's Life of Bolingbroke, p. 97. † Id. p. 132.
‡ Burnet's Queen Anne, vol. ii. p. 583.

Lockhart, "that Her Majesty might judge from the address she had read, that I should not be acceptable to my constituents if I gave my consent for bringing over any of that family, either now, or at any time hereafter." "At this," adds Lockhart, "she smiled, and I withdrew, and then she said to the Duke of Hamilton, she believed I was an honest man, and a fair dealer."*

"Your affairs," says Bolingbroke, in a letter to the Pretender, "hasten to a crisis, and I hope that with prudence and fortitude, for they must go hand in hand, your Majesty's restoration will soon be accomplished. The Duke of Shrewsbury is frankly engaged, and was, the last time I heard of him, very sanguine. I submit to your Majesty whether a letter from yourself to him, or a message through me, would not be proper. As to Peterborough, I think, indeed, he is not to be neglected. I will write to him, and even offer to meet him. Your Majesty knows his character, and will give me your orders how far he is to be promised. May I presume to ask whether something particular has been said to Marlborough? he is at this moment much perplexed, and openly pushed at. Should not the Duke of Berwick, at least, by your Majesty's order, in this point of time, endeavour to fix him? An application justly timed has always double force. I had forgot to add, that any treaty with Marlborough must be kept very secret from Ormond; for though

* Lockhart Papers, p. 317. A.D. 1713.

nothing can cool the zeal of the latter, yet this might perhaps give him some dissatisfaction at heart."*

Again, "I do not see why, when James goes to Scotland, he might not write a letter to Marlborough to require his attendance there on his declaring openly for him in England, for which an order would of necessity oblige Marlborough to pull off the mask, and trim no longer. I think it is now more than ever *now* or *never*."†

"The more I think of it, the more I am convinced that it is absolutely necessary that the Duke of Ormond should, on his arrival in England, instantly disperse some popular paper amongst the people, and that declarations and letters should be ready to fly about to all parts, on the very moment of time when your Majesty is arrived, or is upon your arrival. This is not my private sense alone, but the joint opinion of the Duke and of every man who knows anything of the present state of the country. What methods of carrying on business formerly might be I am ignorant; but of late years those have done it best who have, by frequent and plausible appeals to the people, gained the nation on their side. Since the decay of the monarchy, and the great rise of the popular power without, we have been forced to combat them at their own weapon."‡

Again, "I am very happy that your Majesty

* Lord Bolingbroke to James, Aug. 20. 1715. — Letters now at Windsor.

† James to the Duke of Berwick, Aug. 23. 1715. — Id.

‡ Lord Bolingbroke to James, Oct. 18. 1715. — Id.

is pleased to approve of the frankness with which I have exposed to you several disagreeable truths. The state of England is so much altered from what it was some years ago, and the notions in which men are educated are so different, that those motives which would have been sufficient formerly will not be so now. Whenever your Majesty sets your foot on English ground you will find all this to be true, even in a greater degree than I have presented it to you. Without arms and ammunition, neither England nor Scotland can support your cause; for, Sir, your Majesty must not expect a revolution now; you must depend upon a war." *

"What I had the honour to foretell you, Sir, proves true: this spirit" (popularity of the Hanover succession) "increases, and all the measures taken to extinguish the flame seem but as fresh fuel to make it burn higher. Things are hastening to that point that either you, Sir, at the head of the Tories, must save the church and constitution of England, or both must be irretrievably lost for ever." †

"The party of James had been long flattered with the hope of seeing the succession altered by Oxford (the adviser of Anne); but by the premature death of the Queen all their expectations at once were blasted. The Hanoverian interest prevailed, which completed their confusion, and they

* Lord Bolingbroke to James, Nov. 2. 1715.

† Lord Bolingbroke to James, Aug. 19. 1715.

now found themselves without a leader to give consistency to their designs, and force to their councils. Upon recollection, they saw nothing so eligible as silence and submission; they hoped much from the assistance of France, and still more from the vigour of the Pretender."

Lord Littleton's Hist. of England, vol. ii. p. 124.

CHAPTER X.

GEORGE I. AND GEORGE II.

House of Brunswick support the free Constitution of Great Britain. — Apprehension of the People of England from the Power and Ambition of the Monarch of France. — George I. not popular in his Manners. — Dread of the Return of the Stuarts. — All the populous and manufacturing Towns in Great Britain declare for the Hanover Succession. — The ignorant part of the remote Districts the only Population in favour of the Pretender.

ALTHOUGH the ministry of Queen Anne were desirous of supporting the interests of the Pretender, yet the feeling of the community was so strong in favour of the House of Hanover, that a clause was inserted in the Treaty of Utrecht, securing the Protestant succession.* The Stuarts being expelled by the nearly unanimous sentiment of the country, the House of Brunswick, as descendants of James the First†, were the only family on whom the suc-

* One of the articles of the above treaty contained this provision: — "His Most Christian King promises for himself and heirs that he will at no time disturb the Queen of Great Britain, her heirs and successors of the Protestant line, nor give any favour, protection, &c. to those who should oppose the Protestant succession."

† George I. was great-grandson of James VI. of Scotland, and I. of England. On his mother's side, he was a Stuart.

cession, under such circumstances, could fall. Their firm attachment to the Protestant faith rendered them peculiarly acceptable to the nation, especially as apprehension of the return of the Stuarts and of the resumption of papal influence was not quite obliterated from the public mind.

In this observation, it is not intended to insinuate that any individual must, merely because he belongs to a particular family, be more attached to liberty than any other; yet it must be allowed, that the peculiar situation in which the family of the House of Brunswick was placed, made it their interest to preserve inviolate that constitution, for the formation and preservation of which they were called to the throne, and renders it probable that they will preserve it. If the old dynasty had remained to this day, it is more than likely that they would never entirely have lost sight of the power exercised by their ancestors, which they would imagine was their right: in all probability they would have regarded our constitution with dislike and jealousy; and, if a favourable opportunity had presented itself, they would have attempted to regain the power they had lost. Their attacks on the liberty of the people would have been incessant; and although they would have had

His mother was Sophia, consort of Ernest Augustus, Elector of Hanover, and youngest daughter of the Princess Elizabeth, (daughter of James I.), who married Frederick, Elector Palatine of the Rhine, (afterwards King of Bohemia).

little chance of succeeding against public opinion, the national mind would have been kept in a constant state of watchfulness, agitation, and apprehension.' It must be owned that the supposition that the House of Stuart would have been permitted to remain is improbable; it is only made to show the situation of the nation, and how much its decision was guided by public opinion.

For some time previously to the accession of the House of Brunswick, the elements of civilisation were not sufficiently extended in Ireland and in parts of Scotland, to enable the people to appreciate the benefits arising from free institutions. In the former country the lower class were destitute of information; possessed little or no facility of intercourse; their conduct towards each other, and towards new settlers, sufficiently evinced their deficiency of moral principle, or just views on religious subjects; nor did they possess that commercial activity necessary to create capital, and to insure the formation of a middle class of society. At the commencement, and even in the middle of the 18th century, superstitious or bigoted sentiments pervaded the lower class in Ireland, and the upper class were not in sufficient numbers to improve or ameliorate the state of the population.

The people of England seem to have retained their apprehension of the military power of France, and the ambition of her rulers, which was so strongly felt after the expulsion of James II., and even before

that period. This feeling continued with more or less intensity during the reigns of George I. and George II. Whatever treaty, therefore, was entered into by this country with France, was scrutinised with jealous attention; and the pacification entered into by George I. does not appear to have been altogether acceptable to the nation, or sanctioned by the best informed.

The party in Great Britain, whom the government of this sovereign had most to dread, — in reality the only *party* that could be so called, were those attached to the Roman Catholic religion. These, at the time, formed a considerable number; and many amongst them were men of birth, and of extensive possessions. Their influence, however, was nugatory against the flow of public opinion.

Like William III., George I. was not much acquainted with the language or manners of the people over whom he came to preside; nor did he study the art of popular conciliation. In him, however, these deficiencies were of no moment. He was hailed by public opinion as a constitutional king. The good sense of the nation made every allowance for any defect of language or manner, which, to the bulk of the middle class, was of little consequence, as not coming under their immediate observation.

Few motives could have induced the country to be in favour of hostilities with France, unless under an apprehension of being invaded, connected also at that period with a dread of the return of the

Stuarts, or from some danger to our commerce or colonies. The failure of attempts made by the exiled family in 1715 and 1745, show how little their cause was supported, and how few adherents they retained in the island. The son of James II., or the Pretender, as he is commonly styled, was countenanced by the powerful support of the French monarch, who supplied him with arms, money, and means of aggression. Opportunities of communicating with whatever friends might remain in England or Scotland were open; the House of Stuart might reasonably have relied on the Catholics in Great Britain, and on whatever opponents there might be of the family of Brunswick, together with all the malcontents likely to be found in a country where a change in the royal dynasty had been effected. With such expectations, it must have been a subject of surprise to the Stuarts that so few joined the Pretender's standard on his arrival in this island. In some, this apathy might not arise from indifference as to his success, but apprehension of the consequences.

It may not be unworthy of remark, that the only portion of the people who really espoused the cause of the Pretender — who risked, by volunteering their services, not only their persons but their property, were precisely those who were under the control of others, and who, from their remote situation and want of communication and commerce, had not yet been influenced by public opinion.

The best and most able supporters of the Stuarts in their attempts to recover the Crown of England were the chiefs of clans in the Highlands of Scotland, who still retained that feudal power over their vassals and clansmen, which the cheering rays of the British constitution were gradually dissolving. No middle class of society existed in the Highlands; scarcely any intercourse, no industry, and little wealth, and, of course, no influence of public opinion. In other parts of Scotland, on the contrary, where industry, facility of communication, and civilisation had made their appearance, public opinion was in existence, and declared itself, as it had done in England, in favour of the constitution, and the House of Brunswick, against the Stuarts.

The chance of the Stuarts was hopeless from the beginning, and nothing but a sort of desperation could have induced them to make the attempts in 1715 and 1745. In these, particularly the last, they got together a handful of men, who fought with most determined valour; yet it availed nothing against the general feeling prevalent in England, and in the civilised part of Scotland. So well aware was the French Court of the state of public opinion, that they ventured none of their own troops in the undertaking, nor did they seem at any time to enter so heartily into the cause of the Stuarts as they might have done had they imagined there was any chance of success.

Horace Walpole gives a lively account of the

young Pretender's position in 1745*:—"The Rebellion goes on; but hitherto there is no rising in England, nor landing of troops from abroad; indeed not even of ours or the Dutch. The best account I can give you is, that, if the *boy* has no enemies in Scotland, at least he has openly very few friends. Nobody of note has joined him. For cannon they have nothing but one-pounders; their greatest resource is money; they have *force* Louis-d'ors. The last accounts left them at Perth, making shoes and stockings. Two hundred of the Monroe clan have joined our forces. Spirit seems to rise in London, though not in the proportion it ought; and then the person most concerned does everything to check its progress: when the ministers propose anything of the rebellion, he cries, 'Pho, pho, don't talk to me of that stuff.' Mr. Pelham talks every day of resigning; he certainly will as soon as all this is got over, if it is got over.

"The young chevalier has set a reward on the King's head: we are told that his brother is set out for Ireland. However, there is hitherto little countenance givin to the undertaking by France or Spain. It seems an effort of despair, and of weariness of the manner in which he has been kept in France. On the grenadiers' caps is written, 'A grave or a throne.' The merchants are very

* Letter from Horace Walpole to Sir H. Mann, Arlington Street, Sept. 13. 1745.

zealous, and are opening a great subscription for raising troops. The other day, at the city meeting to draw up the address, Alderman Heathcote proposed a petition for redress of grievances, but no one man seconded him. We have very great hopes that the Highlanders will not follow him [the young Pretender] so far [Edinburgh]. Very few of them last time could be persuaded to go so far as Preston, and several refused to attend King Charles II. when he marched to Worcester. The Caledonian Mercury never calls them 'the rebels,' but 'the Highlanders.'"

The desire of the French ruler probably was, to foster a division in Great Britain — to allow the parties to weaken each other, so that neither should gain a permanent ascendancy. In all this he was disappointed by the voice of the nation.

It would be superfluous to enter into any details respecting the unsuccessful endeavours made in 1715 to place the son of James II. on the English throne. These endeavours in that year, and thirty years after, were abortive, and never could have proved successful. Even one of the supporters of the Pretender thus describes his attempt in 1715, and his character:—"On his being presented with the draft of a declaration to be dispersed in England, he took exception against several passages, and particularly those by which a direct promise of securing the churches of England and Scotland was made; he was told, he said, that in conscience

he could not make such a promise; and, on being further urged to compliance, asked, with warmth, why they were so desirous to have him if they expected from him those things which his religion did not allow. After consulting his confidents and casuists, the papers were at length printed, but with amendments."

The same writer adds, "His religion is not founded on the love of virtue, and the detestation of vice — on a sense of that obedience which is due to the will of the Supreme Being, or of those obligations which human creatures formed to live in practical dependence on one another lie under. The spring of his whole conduct was fear: he has all the superstition of a Capuchin, but I found no tincture of true religion; and I conversed with very few among the Roman Catholics themselves who did not think him too much of a Papist."

On the writer's arrival at Paris he * published a narrative of the expedition in Scotland, and declared that, a month before the Chevalier landed, the resolution was taken of abandoning Perth in consequence of the total failure of their expectations.

When George I. dissolved Parliament †, and opened the session of the one recently elected, his Majesty expressed his concern in being obliged to inform the country of the dangerous conspiracy hatched for some time past, and which was still carrying on against his person and government in

* The Earl of Mar. † October 1722.

favour of the Pretender. He concluded in a very earnest and animated manner:—"Had I, since my accession to the throne, ever attempted any innovation in our established religion; had I in any one instance invaded the liberty or property of my subjects, I should less wonder at any endeavour to alienate the affections of my people, and draw them into measures that can end in nothing but their own destruction. But to hope to persuade a free people, in full enjoyment of all that is dear to them, to exchange freedom for slavery, the Protestant religion for Popery, and to sacrifice at once the price of so much blood and treasure as have been spent in defence of our present Establishment, seems an infatuation not to be accounted for. Your own interest and welfare call upon you to defend yourselves. I rely upon the Divine protection, the support of my Parliament, and the affections of my people, which I shall endeavour to preserve by continuing to make the laws of the realm the rule and measure of all my actions."

This is given here, not because it was a speech from the throne, but because it has been the custom, in a speech made on such an occasion, to utter what may be considered as acceptable to the nation, and as responsive to public opinion. This address, therefore, evinces the sentiment of the community at that period, and is of moment on that account.

After the establishment of the House of Brunswick on the throne, some disorders appeared, which were

chiefly the ebullitions of popular clamour, that really had, and could have, no result. The character of George I. was such as entitled him to respect. "The rectitude and benevolence of his intentions were always apparent; but he was, from the nature of his situation, compelled to throw himself into the hands of a party; and from the easiness of his disposition he was too often persuaded to acquiesce in measures, which a more perfect acquaintance with the real state of facts and opinions would have shown to be as contrary to his interests as they were to his inclinations. In the view of Europe he sustained the character of a prudent, an able, and a fortunate prince: the noble speculative principles of government and of liberty, civil and religious, which this monarch was not only ready, but anxious on all occasions to avow, and by which the general tenor of his conduct was regulated, it is hoped will continue to be the distinguishing and favourite characteristics of the House of Brunswick."*

The gradual spread of liberal principles, and consequently of civilisation, is obvious in the reign of George the First. It might be objected that, in this reign, the Septennial Act was passed, and also the Riot Act. These, however, were not levelled against liberty, but were made (the latter particularly) for the purpose of guarding against the actious influence of popular clamour, encouraged and supported by meetings where the fury of the

* Belsham's Hist. England.

lower class, and threats of physical violence, were likely to overawe the middle class, and supersede public opinion. The Septennial Act was probably the most unpopular measure of this reign; but it seems to have originated in similar motives to the other.

The attempt made under George II. to repeal the Test Act, which barred the admission of Protestant dissenters to civil employments*, may be mentioned as an instance of the increasing liberality of the age. It failed at the time, because public opinion was not as yet sufficiently enlightened; but the bringing forward such a measure evinced clearly that at no distant period it would be carried.

As other proofs of the regular, though gradual advance of civilisation, the following proceedings in the House of Commons (1747) may be adduced. "We are taken up," says Horace Walpole, "with the Scotch Bills for *weakening clanships and taking away heritable jurisdictions*." Again, "We had a good-natured bill moved to-day by Sir William Yonge, to allow counsel to prisoners on impeachments for treason, as they have on indictments. It hurt every body at old Lovat's trial, all guilty as he was, to see an old wretch worried by the first lawyers in England, without any assistance but his own unpractised defence. The bill had not the least opposition; yet this was a point struggled for

* March, 1736.

in King William's reign, as a privilege and dignity inherent in the Commons, that the accused by them should have no assistance of counsel. How reasonable, that men chosen by their fellow subjects for the defence of their fellow subjects, should have rights detrimental to the good of the people whom they are to protect! Thank God, we are a better-natured age, and have relinquished this savage privilege with a good grace!"

About this period another circumstance occurred, demonstrating the progress of civilisation. The English code of laws was released from part of that load of absurdity and ignorance, which had so long disgraced it, by the repeal of James the First's cruel statutes against conjuration and witchcraft. The judicial murders these occasioned in former centuries will be noticed in the progress of our inquiries.

CHAPTER XI.

GEORGE III.

Length and Importance of this Reign. — General Warrants declared to be illegal. — Letters of Junius. — Fate of the Toleration Bill. — Riots of 1780. — Bill to reform Parliament. — Peace-ministers and War-ministers. — The American Revolution. — Public Opinion on this Subject. — Its Vacillations. — Unpopularity of the War with America. — Its Impolicy. — Declaration of the Commons. — The India Bill. — The Troubles in Holland. — Attempts to abolish the Slave Trade. — Mr. Pitt's Speech in favour of the Abolition. — Measure for Relief of Roman Catholic Disabilities.

THE length of time occupied by the reign of this monarch, and the peculiar situation in which Great Britain was placed, render it one of singular importance, not merely in the history of this country, but as relating to several events which demonstrate the increased influence of the subject under our investigation.

In the reign of George III. facility of communication, and the other requisites for civilisation, increased in an unusual degree. Although public opinion in this country was sufficiently powerful in 1688, to occasion not only a change in the government, but security for, or rather establishment of, a constitution, yet this sentiment was then weak as compared to its subse-

quent strength. If a mechanical comparison may be allowed, a given power in 1688 was able to effect a certain purpose: since that period this power has nearly doubled itself; but being in a state of quiescence, it is not so perceptible, and therefore can only be estimated by inference.

Let us consider the several events bearing on our subject, as they present themselves in chronological order.

It was deemed, in the early part of this reign, that general warrants were not in accordance with the liberty of the subject. * Without entering minutely into the discussions on this question, which caused considerable sensation at the time, it may suffice to recur to the fact, that the practice of issuing general warrants was, by a resolution of the House of Commons, declared to be illegal.*

The excitement created by the Letters of Junius, and the tumults and disorder that followed, show that popular clamour had yet some influence, and that by many it was mistaken for the contrary sentiment. †

* This took place in 1766. General warrants were warrants issued by one of the secretaries of state to arrest any person; in some measure resembling the "lettres de cachet" prevalent in France until the Revolution.

† The letters of Junius appeared in 1769; the publisher, Woodfall, who had been brought to trial under an ex-officio bill, was found by the jury "Guilty of printing and publishing only," which was tantamount to an acquittal. Alluding to these letters, an historian observes, "The writer did not hesitate, in

Perhaps the fate of the Toleration Bill, as brought into the House of Commons*, may show that the influence of public opinion has much increased since that time.

This bill was received by the Commons not merely with approbation, but applause. There was a warm and animated debate; a very considerable majority of the House passed the bill, with the full concurrence of ministers, almost by acclamation. But when introduced into the other House, it was rejected by a considerably majority†, and the measure was consequently thrown out. It is scarcely necessary to say more on this subject; the change that a few years have made will be sufficiently apparent!

The next session the motion was again brought forward, and in the course of the debate that arose,

numerous instances, to insinuate charges the most heinous and criminal against persons the most distinguished in life, without pretending to support them by even the shadow of proof, though loudly and repeatedly called on. The Princess Dowager of Wales he abused most grossly, styling her the abandoned inamorata of the detested Mortimer; Sir W. Draper he accuses of having sold the companions of his victory; another, in a tone of still more impudent and contemptible abuse, with having, as ranger of one of the royal forests, refused the king's timber to the royal navy. When a man brings forward anonymous accusations of this nature, and basely shrinks from the subsequent investigation, he stands recorded to all future times a liar, an assassin, and a coward."—*Belsham's Hist. of Great Britain*, vol. i. p. 329.

* This bill was brought into the Commons House in 1772.

† Non-contents 102, Contents for the bill 29.

an eloquent statesman thus expressed himself*: "The Reformation has laid open the Scriptures to all; let them not be shut again. Laws in support of ecclesiastical power are pleaded, which it would shock humanity to execute. It is said that religious sects have done great mischief when not kept under restraint; but history affords no proof that sects have ever been mischievous when they were not oppressed and persecuted by the ruling church."

In reference to the riots that occurred† on account of the Act for relieving Roman Catholics from certain penalties equally impolitic and unjust, it is only necessary to remark on the spirit of bigotry and ebullition of popular clamour by which these outbreaks were conducted, and to show how slight a degree of information could then have been found in the lower classes, by whom such deeds were perpetrated. Civilisation assuredly was not then in its present state.

When an attempt was made in the House of Commons to bring in a bill to alter the mode of representation‡, and to reform Parliament, the question was argued with considerable ability; but lost by a large majority, and does not seem at the time to have occasioned so great a manifestation of public opinion as might have been expected; but it prepared probably the ground and laid the seeds for the

* Lord Chatham's speech, session 1773.

† 1780.

‡ Motion by Mr. Pitt, session 1783.

ultimate formation of public opinion on the subject.

A state of profound peace and perfect security from foreign aggression, is not, in England at least, favourable to universal content. In proportion as there is nothing in foreign affairs to interest the community, the measures of the Government at home will be more keenly scanned and acrimoniously disputed.

In general, those ministers have enjoyed the greatest popularity who have had the management of affairs during a war, and who, with a considerable expenditure, brought that war to a successful termination. Such ministers have been more popular than those who held the reins of the kingdom in a state of peace, and who studiously avoided causes of difference with other nations. Within a few years of each other, Sir Robert Walpole and Lord Chatham confirm the observation. The former fostered peace; the latter took every opportunity of entering into war. The one always made it his policy to prevent the country from engaging in hostilities; the latter was equally ready and willing to accept the challenge of any neighbouring monarch, and engage in a contest. The former was never, not even for a limited period, during the entire course of his administration, much liked in England; the latter was probably as popular as a minister can be in a free country, where the character and conduct of those who

direct public affairs are closely watched; and where, from the state of parties and the nature of the constitution, their actions will always be animadverted on by one party at least.

Let us pass over the occurrences that took place during the early part of this reign, and proceed to the cause and result of the American revolution. In so doing, it will be desirable to reflect for a moment on the state of public opinion regarding that very important event, and show how far the ministers of that day were supported by the people, in the rise and prosecution of war with the colonies.

In the definition already given of civilisation, it has been observed that popular clamour, though confounded by some with the actual voice of the people, is not only distinct from it, but totally different in every respect. Contemptible as popular clamour is, yet it is possible that, for a time at least, it may influence weak and timorous minds, more especially if confounded with public opinion by unthinking persons. In alluding to the American revolution, it is certainly not intended either to censure or to exculpate the minister and the party by whose advice that event was brought about, and the war carried on. The only object is to trace public opinion, and to show its influence in our island; not to attack or defend the measures of one minister or of another.

When symptoms of discontent first manifested themselves in America — when open resistance to

the orders of the mother country was attempted — it cannot be denied that a feeling tending to encourage the minister of that day in a commencement of hostilities against the colonies, existed in Parliament and in the country. It is possible, however, that this tendency, such as it was, did not accrue from public opinion, but was nothing more than popular clamour, supported and encouraged by the Government, and by the wishes of a few individuals, and mercenary politicians, who might imagine that the taxation of the colonies would assist the finances of the mother country, and husband her means and expenditure, which they absurdly thought might, like the Roman state, be supported by the produce of her offspring. To confirm this, it may be remarked, that if, at the commencement of the war, public opinion was not so distinctly pronounced in England as to prevent the minister from attempting to subjugate the colonies by force, yet such force had scarcely been employed before public opinion pronounced loudly against its continuance.

The first and fugitive encouragement given to the war was evinced by the nation, when that temporary jealousy and rivalship, and consequent dislike, if not antipathy, had originated, likely to be found in communities as well as in individuals, who, long held together by the closest ties of laws, language, and manners, had in a moment snapped them asunder and engaged in a severe

contest. Even at the commencement of the American war, little probability, however, existed that the sentiment of the country would, for any length of time, support the administration in its continuance. In every point of view, the attempt to reduce the population of our American colonies to obedience by force, was impolitic and unjust — impolitic, because costly, uncertain, and likely to alienate our national offspring; and unjust, because it was an attempt to enforce taxation on an unrepresented people. It would have been advisable for the ministry of that day to avoid giving offence to the people of those colonies, and to keep them in obedience to the mother country by conciliation. Had the contest in which we embarked been attended with success, it could only be by exertions and expenditure surpassing any advantage to be gained. In the event of reducing the American colonies to obedience, would it have been possible to preserve so constrained a state of things for any length of time? How could this be done in so extensive a country, whose population was yearly increasing in a great and unprecedented manner? Had the administration at home enforced the right of taxation in America, the minister of the crown would have been able to levy a revenue at pleasure, and render the executive independent of the people. Might not such independence have been incompatible with the security of our present constitution? As the war continued, it was clear that we had

no chance of subduing the colonies. The conduct of ministers, by whom the contest was commenced, would, if persevered in, be still more liable to censure. By engaging in hostilities, they not only incurred the responsibility of the loss of life and useless expenditure, but also of alienating the goodwill, and losing the commerce with a rising commonwealth, which, from a similarity of laws, manners, language, and descent, would naturally be inclined in favour of the parent state.

At the commencement of hostilities between England and America, many imagined that, if the colonies were taxed, the pressure of imposts might be less felt at home. This would not probably be the first instance of individuals, and even of communities, being influenced by their interest.

The length, however, of the contest, the difficulties and enormous expense under which it was carried on, and the uncertainty of the result, all served to operate powerfully on public sentiment. It must also be taken into account, that if, at the outbreak of hostilities, public opinion was not so decidedly pronounced against it, such silence in that powerful voice might be, and probably was, owing to an impression, general at that time, that the revolted colonies might be terrified into obedience when they saw the squadrons in their harbours, and the military power that the parent state was preparing to pour on their shores. This belief, however, could not last long; and when the conflict

between the two countries commenced, and it was known that the colonies were plunged in all the horrors of a protracted warfare, then it was that public opinion rose above all other power, and loudly condemned the war as unnatural, and not likely to be attended with ultimate success. Then it was that the humanity of the people, uniting with public opinion, and strengthened by the hopeless appearance of the contest, forced the Government of that day into terms of accommodation with the United States, and rendered it impossible for them to continue hostilities.

A statesman and author remarks, "Whatever may have been the reason, good or bad, which induced the Government of this country to undertake a war against the insurgent colonies of America, and whatever may have been the policy, it cannot be denied that their spirit was contrary to popular principles." *

No virtues of the sovereign, however eminent, and no ability of the administration, however recognised, could stem the unpopularity of the American war. To imagine that so extensive a country as the United States, becoming peopled and civilised, and possessed of the requisites for the formation of public opinion, would remain for ever a colony of Britain, was out of the question. It was much desired by many in England, and also by

* Lord John Russell's English Constitution.

a considerable number in the United States, (and if an amicable adjustment of the differences had taken place, it would have been attempted to be carried into effect,) that permission should be granted for the people of the provinces to send representatives to the British parliament. Now, supposing such an addition to our representative assembly to have kept pace with the wealth and population of the colonies, (and in no other manner would they have been satisfied,) such an augmentation must have proved injurious to our constitution, to the independence of parliament, and to the best interests of the country. An additional number of members, totally unconnected with Great Britain, poured into the House of Commons, of different interests, and inhabitants of a country several thousand miles distant, would have been an anomaly, and might have served as ready instruments for overturning the dearest rights and privileges of Britons; at any rate, it must be allowed that, by such an admission into parliament, danger and inconvenience would inevitably have followed.

"That the entire separation between England and her colonies, if unaccompanied by hostilities, or by any unkind feeling in the people of each, would have been more beneficial to both, cannot be doubted. These two states, separated from each other by an immense ocean, yet speaking the same language, having the same origin, the same manners, and nearly the same way of thinking, unable to

injure each other permanently, except in their trade, but possessed of the power of imparting to each other all the benefits of a mutual exchange of commodities, an interchange of comforts and conveniences, ought to be cemented together by a feeling of good-will. Such a sentiment must naturally exist and increase, and will, it may be hoped, not be lessened by any jealousy concerning maritime power or commercial rights.*

"The time had now arrived, in which the sense of the public with respect to the continuance of the American war was to be rendered so apparent, that no secret wish for a farther prosecution of it should induce the ministers to take any measures for retarding a final agreement. On February 22d, General Conway moved in the House of Commons, that an address should be presented to His Majesty, imploring him to listen to the advice of his Commons, that the war in America might be no longer pursued for the impracticable purpose of reducing the inhabitants of that country to obedience by force, and to express their hopes that a happy reconciliation might be effected with the revolted colonies. A long debate ensued, in which ministers continued to speak on the subject in a vague and indeterminate manner. On the division, the numbers were, for the address, 193; against it, 194. A ministerial victory by one vote was not likely

* Historical Memoirs of that Time, vol. ii: p. 81.

to deter the opposition from pursuing their point, and on February 27th, General Conway moved a resolution similar to that which had been rejected before the recess, and containing a declaration against an *offensive war* with America. An attempt was made by the Attorney-General to elude the motion, by moving an adjournment of the debate, which was negatived by 234 votes against 215; after which the original motion, and an address to the King, formed upon the resolution, were carried without a division."*

After the conclusion of the American war, the English community gradually increased in commercial and manufacturing industry, and the capital of the country was augmented. There is no particular event at or about this time to cause any manifestation of public opinion.

The discussions on the India Bill excited some public interest. The measures proposed were, by no means sanctioned, but rather opposed, by whatever portion of public opinion manifested itself on the occasion, from apprehension of an increase of patronage in the executive Government.

The great alteration that took place in the members returned, after the dissolution of Parliament in 1784, may, of itself, prove the unpopularity of the attempt made by the former minister (Mr. Fox) to carry the India Bill. The conduct of his political

antagonist, in not dissolving Parliament as soon as he might, and as many would have done, on that occasion, but in waiting until the public mind was fully sensible of the question, and prepared for such an event, shows how fully aware he was of the importance of public opinion, and how desirous to conciliate such a feeling. By delaying the dissolution to the latest moment, the nation was satisfied that such a proceeding was only adopted from the necessity of the case, and until it was impossible to carry on the business of Government with the same Parliament which supported the coalition ministry. "The India Bill, concerning which the public judgment was at first suspended, had now, by a multiplicity of able and popular tracts industriously circulated, been completely developed and explained; and it was almost universally condemned as a measure in the highest degree arbitrary and oppressive, and, with consummate artifice calculated to perpetuate the power of an administration, who were the objects of the national detestation."*

This bill excited much attention at the time, and was the cause of that political change which placed another minister in office.† It was brought in by the minister of that day‡ for the purpose of obtaining for himself and his party the monopoly of the entire patronage of India. This measure,

* History of the Reign of George III. vol. iii. book 21.
† Mr. Pitt. ‡ 18th Nov. 1783.

when it was fully understood by the nation, met with the most determined opposition from public opinion, which enabled the monarch to overturn both ministers, supported as they were at first by a very large majority in the House of Commons.

It was intended to take out of the hands of the East India Company the entire administration, not of their territorial possessions only, but also of their commercial affairs, and to vest the management and entire direction of them in the hands of seven commissioners, named in the bill, and irremoveable by the Crown, except in consequence of an address from either house of Parliament. These commissioners were to be assisted by a subordinate board of nine directors, to be named by Parliament in the first instance, and afterwards chosen by the proprietors. The bill also gave power to the commissioners and directors to enter immediately into possession of all lands, tenements, books, records, vessels, goods, merchandise, and securities in trust for the Company. "The astonishment," says a contemporary historian, "excited by the disclosure of this plan was very great, and while it was on one side of the House extolled as a masterpiece of genius, virtue, and ability, it was on the other reprobated as a deep and dangerous design, fraught with mischief and ruin." "India, it was true," (said Mr. Pitt), wanted reform, but not such a reform as this; — it wanted a *constitutional* alteration, and not a *tyrannical* one, that broke through

every principle of equity and justice. By the bill before the House, an attack was made on the most solemn charters: it pointed a fatal blow against the faith and integrity of parliament: it broke through every tie by which man was bound to man. The principle of this bill once established, what security had the other public companies of the kingdom? What security had the Bank of England? What security had the national creditors, or the public corporations? Or, indeed, what assurance could we have for the Great Charter itself, the foundation of all our liberties? It would be folly in the extreme to suppose, that the principle, once admitted, would operate only upon the present occasion. Good principles might sleep, but bad ones never. It was the curse of society, that when a bad principle was once established, bad men would always be found to give it its full effect. The bill under consideration included a confiscation of the property, and a disfranchisement of the members, of the East India Company — all the several articles of whose effects were transferred by violence to strangers. Imagination was at a loss to guess at the most insignificant trifle that had escaped the harpy jaws of a ravenous coalition. The power was pretended, indeed, to be given in trust for the benefit of the proprietors; but in case of the grossest abuse of trust, to whom was the appeal? To the proprietors? No: — to the majority of either House of Parliament, which the most contemptible minister could not fail to

secure, with the patronage of above two millions sterling given by this bill. The influence which would accrue from this bill—a new, enormous, and unexampled influence—was indeed in the highest degree alarming. Seven commissioners, chosen ostensibly by Parliament, but really by administration, were to involve in the vortex of their authority the patronage and treasures of India. The right honourable mover had acknowledged himself to be a man of ambition; and it now appeared that he was prepared to sacrifice the King, the Parliament, and the people, at the shrine of his ambition. He desired to elevate his present connexions to a situation in which no political convulsions, and no variations of power, might be able to destroy their importance, and put an end to their ascendency."

The India Bill, although unimportant at present, yet deserves to be noticed, as its fate proves how little a faction in the House of Commons, even if headed by the minister, can achieve, when unsupported by public opinion. In his attempt to carry this bill through the House, the minister lost entirely the support of that portion of public opinion which, had he preserved, would have enabled him, assisted by the majority he possessed in the Commons' House, to remain minister, in spite of opposition from any quarter. That the country felt deeply on the subject cannot be doubted.

The impeachment and trial of Warren Hastings

was an event which, though occasioning much interest at the time, had not sufficient importance to rouse public opinion.

The troubles that originated in Holland need not be noticed further than to remark, that, in the disputes between the States-General and the Stadtholder, the British Cabinet supported the tottering power and hereditary rule of the Prince of Orange against the almost universal feeling through the United Provinces in favour of the States-General. It is singular that in these differences the public sentiment in England was not more powerfully proclaimed in favour of the States-General, then contending for a liberal form of government. This apathy in the nation might arise from an apprehension still entertained by Britain of the power and ambition of the sovereign of France, a sentiment prevalent in the island for centuries, and whence so many wars have originated. Let us hope that this apprehension is now set at rest for ever. It was imagined by the English people, that if the Stadtholder and the King of Prussia, the allies of Great Britain, were not supported against the States-General, the latter might become accessory to the ambitious projects of the French: it seems probable also that similar sentiments were espoused by the King of Prussia, and that he was influenced not merely by these political considerations, but by the new connexion that existed between his family and the Stadtholder.

The attempts made* in Parliament to abolish the slave trade evince the increase of civilisation and moral principle in the country, although these measures were not then carried. The minister of that day entered fully into the sentiments of the country, and said, "Intolerable were the mischiefs of that trade, both in its origin and through every stage of its progress. It was promoted by an application to the avarice and the worse passions of the native rulers. To say that slaves could be furnished by fair and commercial means, was absurd. The trade sometimes ceased, as during the late war; occasionally the demand increased; and then again it declined, according to circumstances. How was it possible that to a demand so fluctuating the supply should exactly accommodate itself? If we make human beings articles of commerce, we learn to talk of them as such. Yet the slaves are not allowed the common principle of commerce, that the supply must accommodate itself to the consumption. The truth was, by the slave trade we stopped the natural progress of civilisation; we cut off Africa from the opportunity of improvement; we kept down that Continent in a state of darkness, bondage, ignorance and blood. Was not this an awful consideration for England? While other countries were assisting and enlightening each other, Africa alone had none of these benefits. We had

* April 9. 1791.

obtained as yet only just such knowledge of its productions as to show that there was a capacity for trade, which was checked by us. Even were the mischief in Africa out of the question, the circumstances of the middle passage alone would be reason enough for its abolition. Such a scene as that of the slave ships, with their wretched cargoes to the West Indies, if it could be laid before our eyes, would be sufficient at once to settle the question. He could conceive no more indispensable duty than that of the abolition of such a traffic. Even if consequences were very different from what they did appear, still he should support the abolition. What an aggravation then of guilt would it be, if the policy of the country, instead of being against the measure, was also for it! A more imperious duty than that of abolishing the slave trade was never brought before the legislature."*

Such were the sentiments responded to by the public voice. A recurrence to the question of the slave trade is here made, as evincing the gradual increase in the civilisation of the country.

It is curious to trace the slow but steady march of improvement, and extension of liberal sentiments, in the question relative to the relief of Roman Catholic disabilities. When this measure was brought forward in the Irish Parliament, it was opposed in a very strong manner, although

* Mr. Pitt's speech, April 10. 1791.

the influence of the central Government was exerted in its favour, both seasonably and powerfully. The speaker of the Irish House of Commons declared, "It was an absurd and wicked speculation to look to the total repeal of the restrictive laws against the Catholics in that kingdom, or to endeavour to communicate the efficient power of the Protestants to the Catholics. If therefore," he added, "I am the single man to raise my voice against such a project, I will resist it." *

"Although Mr. Pitt had uniformly and firmly opposed the claim of Catholic emancipation during the existence of a separate legislature in Ireland, he thought fit, in order to facilitate the accomplishment of this favourite object, to give, in concurrence with his colleagues, to the principal Irish Catholics (in return for their assistance, or at least their acquiescence), secret assurances of a complete participation in all political privileges, as soon as the Union should have taken place, and this without being properly authorised to do so by the monarch, whose sanction it was necessary to obtain. When this proposition was made, as the sovereign was not likely to give his consent to the measure, the Chancellor of the Exchequer and the other ministers, being resolved to carry their point, resorted in this emergency to an expedient, which they had, as there is reason to believe, found effectual on former occasions; that

* Foster's speech, March 1793.

is, an offer of resignation, supposing doubtless that no other administration could be formed. It however unexpectedly happened, that his Majesty, after consulting with his secret advisers, resolved to run all risks, and to accept the resignation thus tendered to him.*

The same measure, rejected in the early part of the century, passed some years after, when the sentiment of the public was more pronounced.†

* Belsham, Hist. of Geo. III., vol. viii. p. 128.
† 1801 and 1829.

CHAPTER XII.

GEORGE III.

Effect on Public Opinion of the Revolution in France. — Excesses of the French Demagogues denounced in England. — Public Opinion supports the Government in commencing Hostilities with France. — Popular Clamour enlisted in the same Cause. — Mr. Pitt's Policy. — Suspension by the Bank of England of Cash Payments. — Effect of this. — Republican Societies in Great Britain and Ireland. — Voluntary Contributions of the English Government. — Failure of Negotiations for Peace. — Policy of the ruling Powers in France.

PUBLIC opinion in England was roused into great activity by the Revolution in France. This important event properly appertains to the subject of civilisation in that country, and will there be discussed. At present it will not be noticed further than may be absolutely necessary to elucidate our theory in England, where it occasioned a very powerful feeling. When the juxta-position of England and France is considered, it will appear obvious that a mutual connexion must exist between the two countries; and it cannot be contradicted, that unless in a state of warfare, when all direct communication is closed, any public event of a political nature, in one country, exciting much notice, will create a corresponding sentiment in the other. Such was the case on this occasion. At first, the progress of the French Revolution was hailed with satis-

faction in England; but this feeling was reversed when the excesses of the mobs and of the revolutionary government become apparent.

A great nation, enjoying happiness and freedom, naturally desires that its neighbours should possess the same advantages. Other causes might operate to stimulate the English in supporting the French Revolution at its commencement. It was reasonable to imagine, that were the people of France once possessed of a free and representative form of government, the ambition, and wanton and profligate love of war and conquest, too prevalent in the monarchs of France, might be kept within bounds, if not entirely checked; that the people would turn their attention to domestic concerns and commercial enterprise, and thereby acquire habits of peace and industry. The English constitution presented an excellent model to the French people; besides which, the assistance afforded the United States of America in obtaining their independence created a love of liberty in the French, which, with the increase of civilisation, would not allow the nation to go on under the old system. From these circumstances it was imagined by the well-informed here, that the Revolution in France would bring about a temperate and desirable amelioration of the form of government, and that changes might take place without great disturbance, loss of life, or sequestration of property. The disputes between the parliament of Paris and the former Regent of

France, now renewed with Louis XVI., evinced for some years the state of the public mind in that country.

When, however, it appeared that the upper and middle classes in France were not sufficiently strong to effect such a change without giving undue power to the lower class; when also it was known that many societies* were established in the metropolis of Great Britain, and other chief towns of England, Scotland, and Ireland, in which certain leaders were inclined to adopt the opinions, and seek the support, of the fiercest revolutionary demagogues in France; when the Parisian mobs and the revolutionary tribunals not only set about overturning every establishment, because sanctioned by custom, but also sacrificing the upper and middle classes for the sake of plunder, and of enriching by their spoils the lower; when those sanguinary proscriptions commenced which have stigmatised the name of revolution; when acts of the most atrocious nature, public and private, were perpetrated by the existing mob-government; when law, justice, and order were abolished; when the republicans openly avowed their intention of making war, and enforcing by conquest their principles on those countries who did not adopt the same system of plunder and proscription: then it was that public opinion in Great Britain viewed the Revolution in a different light, and

regarded with dread and abhorrence the proceedings of the democratic tribunals.

In the King's speech it is said, not perhaps very correctly in its commencement, — "I have carefully observed a spirit of neutrality in the present war on the Continent, and have uniformly abstained from any interference with respect to the internal government in France; but it is impossible for me to see, without the most serious uneasiness, the strong and increasing indications which have appeared there of an intention to excite disturbances in other countries, to disregard the rights of neutral nations, and pursue views of conquest and aggrandisement, as well as to adopt towards my allies, the States General, measures which were neither conformable to the laws of nations, nor to the positive stipulations of existing treaties. Under these circumstances it may be right to have recourse to those means of prevention and internal defence with which I am entrusted by law, and to make some augmentation of my naval and military force."

The Government of that day in England, apprehending that the lower class in this country might imitate the example set them by the same class on the Continent, took advantage of the sentiment arising from the causes just mentioned, and obtained the support of public opinion in commencing hostilities with France, and also succeeded in raising popular clamour against republican principles.

"Those principles of civil society, which had been

thought so dangerous to all established governments, that their suppression was the object of a general league, had now taken such firm root in France, that they might bid defiance to external force; and the energy, first excited in their defence, had terminated in a spirit of conquest really formidable to all its neighbours."* This success of the French armies was greatly assisted by the notions of equality, fraternisation, and insurrection encouraged amongst the lower classes by the French wherever they made their appearance.

The policy of Mr. Pitt was to break off all communication between the two countries by war. Thus the introduction of revolutionary doctrines might be shut out, much in the same manner as a contagious distemper. It was found expedient to renew as much as possible the old spirit of rivalry, jealousy, and national prejudice. These attempts were much assisted by the ambitious designs of the revolutionary government in France, which certainly, by its conduct, provoked the commencement of hostilities.

* "The alarm respecting an invasion which prevailed towards the close of the year (1796) was denoted by a circular letter from the Secretary of State to the lieutenants of counties on the English sea coast, dated Nov. 5th, recommending an account to be taken of the live and dead stock in the parishes within twelve miles of the sea, and desiring such lieutenants to communicate with the commander-in-chief of the districts respecting the measures to be employed for the removal of stock, if necessary." —*Annals of George III.'s Reign*, vol. ii. p. 34.

At this time, when one may look back to past events with some degree of coolness, it seems doubtful whether (if no war had taken place) French revolutionary ideas and principles would have been introduced amongst the lower classes in England. The opposers of Mr. Pitt's measures asserted that the war was unnecessary, and that no danger was to be apprehended; his supporters thought otherwise. The latter idea prevailed, and was sanctioned by public opinion. At this day it is difficult to determine the question. The middle class in England was so powerful as to leave little apprehension of any serious commotion in the lower class. In Ireland the state of things was directly opposite: danger, therefore, might accrue to the latter, if not to the former, from preserving peace with the French republic.

At that time other motives, rather of a selfish nature, might influence those classes on whom public opinion chiefly depends.

The measure adopted after the commencement of war with republican France, of suspending cash payments by the Bank, caused an extraordinary increase of a paper currency, which, assisted by other causes contingent on the former, such as the increase in the value of produce, the rent of land, that rose in an unprecedented manner, and the want of commercial facilities by other nations, promoted the trading interests of England. Thus two of the great interests of the nation, the landed and commercial,

both reaping an advantage from these circumstances, and their prosperity extending itself by a thousand different channels through the community, tended to make the war generally palatable. Little doubt can exist that the benefits thus obtained, together with the maritime victories which attested the superiority of the British navy, confirmed public opinion in favour of the measures pursued by the Government, which enabled it to continue hostilities for such a length of time. The nation, then in a fictitious state of prosperity, was expending borrowed money, and saddling the account on future generations.

The Government of the country, thus supported both by public opinion and by popular clamour, continued the contest with energy, and endeavoured even to exceed public opinion in its determined hostility to French democratic principles.

When the active correspondence carried on between the several republican societies formed in Great Britain and Ireland at the commencement of the French revolutionary war, and the discontent that manifested itself in the lower classes in this country, with the dangerous example set them by the French population, are considered, it cannot be denied that our position was then not exempt from danger. There is no saying how far the contagion might have spread if hostilities had not commenced, and national jealousies and antipathies (now, it may be hoped, set at rest for

ever by the progress of civilisation) been excited. The societies in this country were generally formed of active, reckless, and ambitious men, imbued with republican principles, whose vanity told them they had every thing to gain, and whose poverty whispered they had nothing to lose, who were desirous of a revolution in this country, hoping to get something in the scramble. It is true that, even at the close of the last century, and at the commencement of the present, the middle class was powerful, (not certainly as it is now,) but sufficiently so to keep the lower class in order; yet a violent outbreak might have severely injured the credit of the state, then so important; and if a French force could at such a time have got footing in this kingdom, the result might have proved very serious.

If additional evidence were required of the sanction to the continuance of hostilities by public opinion, when the nation was satisfied that a permanent peace with France was not to be obtained, it would appear in the contributions voluntarily and cheerfully made by all classes and every description of people, for that purpose. Very large sums were contributed by wealthy individuals. The manner indeed in which the nation on that occasion came forward, and when each gave according to his means, is one of the most remarkable demonstrations of public opinion that the history

of this, or of any other country, has ever afforded How different were these spontaneous acts of benevolence and patriotism, voluntarily made by a great people, from those so miscalled "benevolences" extorted by the Stuarts from the same people, either by force or by terror, of which our annals afford so many examples!

It was stated by the monarch in his speech †, "That it was with the utmost concern his Majesty acquainted the House of Commons that his earnest endeavour to effect the restoration of peace had been unhappily frustrated, and that the negotiation in which he was engaged had been abruptly broken off by the French government, which had made stipulations evidently inadmissible." When this subject was discussed in Parliament, Mr. Pitt said, "The pretension in the pending negotiation with France consisted of a claim by that country to retain all those territories of which the chance of war had given them a temporary possession, and respecting which they have thought proper, contrary to every principle of equity, and the recognised laws of nations, to pass a constitutional law, declaring, as they interpret it, that they shall not be alienated from the republic. This principle has been as inconsistent in its operation as it was unfounded

* The sale of plate of a few persons about the court of Louis XIV. when he was in depressed circumstances, is not similar to this demonstration.

† Dec. 1796.

in its origin. In discussing the terms of the treaty, I am not obliged to know the constitution or the laws of France, because it was unreasonable in her to advance a pretension upon a foundation inconsistent with the received law of nations, and the established nature of things. I have looked through their voluminous code, and all I find upon the subject is a declaration that France is one and indivisible; and I would recommend that the report on which this decree was founded should be read, in which it will appear that it was passed for the avowed purpose of obtaining for France an indisputable ascendant in Europe, and of suppressing the trade and commerce of other nations."

It appears from an impartial view of the question, that the ruling powers in France were never inclined, during the republic and the reign of Napoleon, to enter cordially into a treaty of lasting peace, on fair terms and reciprocal advantages with this country. They were willing to have a suspension of hostilities, a hollow sort of truce; but their aim at universal power, the desire during the revolutionary frenzy to extend their principles, and the success that attended their arms in nearly every part of Europe, rendered them sanguine in the expectation of ultimately subjecting Great Britain to their policy, if not by force, by insidious treaties and by occasional war and peace. These designs of the French government did not escape the saga-

city of the people of England, and the result was that public opinion here, though anxiously desirous of peace, yet determined on a vigorous prosecution of the war, until such peace could be obtained on safe and honourable terms.

CHAPTER XIII.

GEORGE III.

Serious State of Affairs in England. — Threats of Invasion. — England's Attitude of Defence and Defiance. — Enrolment, as Volunteers, of almost the entire Male Population. — Mr. Pitt's Speech on this subject. — Unparalleled Exertions of Britain. — Paramount Influence of Public Opinion. — Peace of Amiens. — Renewal of War. — Absurd Demands of the French Government. — Austerlitz. — Trafalgar. — Downfal of Napoleon. — Change in the Prospects of England.

MUCH, however, had the nation to endure. When we consider the state of affairs in England at this period, the mutiny at the Nore, that took place the succeeding year, the financial difficulties, the danger of invasion, and the activity of some demagogues in our sister island, and even here, to inflame the minds of the people, and induce them to imitate the example of France, it really appears that no Government could by any possibility have extricated itself, except kept up by the powerful influence of public sentiment.

From the early part of this century, until Bonaparte broke up his camp at Boulogne, England was continually threatened with invasion from the other side of the Channel. These hostile demonstrations

heightened the patriotic fervour then existing, and procured the support of public opinion in regard to a continuance of the war.

The French camps were formed facing the English coast; one at Ostend, another between Gravelines and Dunkirk, and a third at Boulogne. Naval preparations also were carried on with great activity along the Dutch and Flemish shores, and, at a subsequent period, extended even to Denmark. Besides which, the combined fleets of France and Spain, some years after defeated at Trafalgar, presented a most formidable appearance, and could not but make the chance of invasion a subject of deep interest to all thinking minds in that day.

These hostile preparations were considered by the Government and by public opinion in England with a steady coolness; danger was fully apparent, but it produced, not terror, but additional energy and caution. No measure was omitted which might contribute to the public safety. The whole kingdom seemed united, and animated with the spirit of patriotism and of military ardour; and a full and just confidence was placed in the national courage and resources.

About this time a circular letter was issued by the Secretary of State to the lord lieutenants of counties, stating "that the naval and military preparations in the ports and on the coasts of France and Holland had of late been pursued with great activity, and signifying his Majesty's earnest wish

that the several corps of volunteer cavalry and infantry throughout the kingdom might be kept in a state of immediate service."

This request was every where obeyed with the utmost alacrity. Reviews and field-days became common in every district, almost in every parish; the whole country assumed a military air, and an attitude not merely of defence but of defiance. Guards and piquets were mounted the entire length of the coast; frigates and advice-boats were at their proper places; while a chain of vessels of war stretched along the whole extent of the Channel, at a small distance from the enemy's shore.

The sentiment of the country and influence of civilisation are apparent in the formation of the volunteer system of enrolment, or organisation and discipline, for security against invasion. To men of active habits, of professional or commercial pursuits, time is valuable, — more so in this country, probably, than in any other. Yet, during the continuance of hostilities with France, more particularly when the fear of invasion was entertained, and the danger was apparent, nearly the entire male population of the country, whose means would afford it, came forward, enrolled themselves at their own expense in some local corps, and, without pay, submitted to perform the duty of soldiers.

In July, 1803, the Secretary of War having brought in a bill to amend an act to enable his Majesty more effectually to provide for the defence

and security of the realm, Mr. Pitt made the following remarks: —

"I feel sincerely happy that this measure has been at length brought before the House, as it affords a prospect of that vigour which is necessary in the present conjuncture. I approve of its principle and object. It indeed is founded on the principles of the plan, which, unconnected as I am with his Majesty's government, I have thought it my duty to intimate to ministers. I have been always decidedly of opinion that such a measure was essentially necessary, in addition to our regular force, in order to put the question as to our domestic security entirely beyond all doubt. I am not now disposed, because, indeed, I do not think it necessary, to enter into any investigation of the degree of danger which the country has to apprehend, though I am aware it is material that the danger should not be underrated. But to return to the measure before the House. I rejoice in its introduction, as the most congenial in its spirit to the constitution of this country, and in its execution not at all likely to meet any obstacle from the character or disposition of the people. In its structure there is nothing new to our history; in its tendency there is nothing ungrateful to our habits; it embraces the interests, it avails itself of the energies, and it promises to establish the security of the country. It imposes no burthens, nor does it propose any arrangement of which it can be in the

power of any class of the community to complain. Its object is the safety of all, without containing any thing in its provisions offensive to any. It is perfectly agreeable to the best institutions of civilised society, and has for its basis the rudiments of our constitutional history.

"It is obvious, that unless we make efforts adequate to the crisis in which we are placed, the country is insecure, and if those efforts cannot be effectual without compulsion, I trust no man can entertain a doubt of the propriety of resorting to it: but I have a confident expectation that compulsion will be unnecessary; that the number of voluntary offers will be sufficient to obviate the necessity of that disagreeable alternative. It is, however, an alternative of which I hope no man will disapprove, should the necessity arise. Such a plan is highly desirable; for it would be unwise to leave the defence of the country placed on our naval force, however superior, or in our regular army, however gallant and well disciplined, or even in the people armed *en masse*, unless previously drilled in military manœuvres, and subject to the directions of Government, who, by the measure before the House, are to be invested with ample powers of rendering the application of this force effectual, and of directing it to the several branches of public service which circumstances may call for. The training of the people, however, should be prompt; no delay should be suffered, for there is

not room to allow it. The efforts of those to be entrusted with the execution of this important duty should be unremitted, and indeed of all public and private individuals, until the country shall be completely secure against any attacks of the enemy. This security is certain, if every man will be active in his station; and of that activity I have not the least doubt, if Government will give the proper stimulus.

"The amount of our danger, therefore, it would be impolitic to conceal from the people. It was the first duty of ministers to make it known, and after doing so, it should have been their study to provide against it, and to point out the means to the country by which it might be averted. It is quite impossible that a people will make adequate efforts to resist a danger, of the nature and extent of which they are studiously kept in ignorance.

"I shall express my earnest hope that no time will be wasted hereafter — that every instant will be actively engaged, until the country be completely safe. I think that some arrangements should be made to connect the different departments of the executive authority, that, upon orders issued from Government to the lord-lieutenants of counties, the people might be immediately set in motion; that, without interfering with agriculture, which should not by any means be disturbed, the several classes might be disciplined, to attend the drill at least two days in each week, to assemble in parti-

cular places throughout the country; the limitation of distance from the residence of each man to the place of assembly to be about six miles, the time of attendance to be not less than half a day. The distance I propose is not more than the stout English peasantry are in the habit of going, when led to a cricket match or any other rural amusement. These men, in my conception, might be disciplined by soldiers on furlough, who, on being called back to their regiment, when danger should actually reach our shores, might be enabled to bring with them one hundred sturdy recruits, prepared for military action through their means.

"Much has been said of the danger of arming the people. I confess that there was a time when that fear would have had some weight; but there never was a time when there could have been any fear of arming the whole people of England, and particularly not under the present circumstances. I never, indeed, entertained any apprehensions from a patriot army regularly officered, according to the manner specified in the measure before the House, however I might hesitate to permit the assemblage of a tumultuary army otherwise constituted. From an army to consist of the round bulk of the people, no man who knows the British character could have the least fear—if it even were to include the disaffected; for they would bear so small a proportion to the whole, as to be incapable of doing mischief, however mischievously disposed. There was indeed

a time when associations of traitors, systematically organised, excited an apprehension of the consequences of a sudden armament of the populace: but that time is no more, and the probability is now, as occurred in the case of the volunteers, that if there are still any material number of disaffected, by mixing them with the loyal part of the community, the same patriotic zeal, the same submission to just authority, will be soon found to pervade the whole body, and that all will be equally anxious to defend their country or perish in the attempt — that the good and the loyal will correct the vicious disposition of the disaffected, will rectify their errors, and set right their misguided judgments. We may thus enlist those among our friends, who would otherwise, perhaps, become the auxiliaries of our enemy. Under all these circumstances, Mr. Pitt said, he felt that the objections urged upon this score were not tenable, and that they ought not to have any weight against a measure which was necessary to the preservation of public order and private happiness."

The organisation of the volunteers at this time is alluded to as affording an example, hitherto unknown in the annals of mankind, of an entire population arming themselves of their own free will, in defence of their country, without pay or any other motive than patriotism.

Although the war was not unattended with success, and the vanity of the people was flattered

by many naval victories, yet public opinion was gradually turning against the continuance of what was considered a useless and expensive contest. Apprehension from French aggression gave way before the universal spirit shown by our country. The Government of Great Britain had deemed it advisable to conclude the Treaty of Amiens with the First Consul, to the satisfaction of, and in accordance with, the wishes of the community. The Revolution in France was then considered to be concluded. The Government of that country had the appearance of being established, and the Chief Consul was in all probability possessed of sufficient power and influence to repress anarchy and restore order.

But when the determined hostility of Bonaparte towards Great Britain was perceptible; when it was evident that many of his edicts were calculated to injure the trade, and affect the commercial prosperity, of this island; and when, moreover, it was apparent that the treaty was nothing more than an armed truce, in which nearly an equal expenditure was incurred as during the war, without any corresponding advantage; public opinion turned in favour of renewed hostilities. Without such support, no Government could have found it possible to impose on a free people the enormous taxes then levied: yet were these imposts not only not opposed by the voice of the country, but paid without reluctance. The exertions of Britain during the

contest were unparalleled, and afford an example of what can be achieved by public opinion, and the resistance capable of being made by a free, virtuous, and civilised people against foreign invasion.

There is no necessity to enter into details of the war; they are accessible to all. These circumstances have only been alluded to here, as serving to illustrate the power, the vigilance, and the paramount influence of public opinion in Great Britain.

But war did not accord with the interest or the views of the French Government at that precise period, although their intentions were far from being pacific, as appeared by subsequent events, and by Napoleon's conduct.

After the Peace of Amiens, the exertions of emissaries in Great Britain, to spread amongst the lower class the doctrines of equality and of a division of property, were unremitting. It may appear singular that these were attended with no better success, considering that such sentiments are always agreeable to the lower classes, particularly when ignorant and in distress, and considering also the activity of the agents employed. It follows from this, that the strength of public opinion, and of the upper and middle classes, must have been considerable; it also evinces how little influence remains in the lower class, in a civilised country, where public opinion is dominant, and what small danger there is of any revolution taking place by their means in this country.

When the renewal of war with France in 1803 is considered, it will appear that this country had in reality no other course to pursue. It was deemed necessary that Malta should be retained to preserve Egypt, and thus frustrate any attack through that country on India. On these, and many other grounds, the nation, although adverse to war, and most anxious for peace, supported the Government in its renewal of hostilities, and bore the heavy pressure of taxation (the natural consequence) without much reluctance. Probably the great gains made in the cruising trade by the vessels belonging to this country were not without their influence. The acts of the French government were certainly such as to justify the public in this country in entertaining strong apprehensions from the ambitious and grasping character of the ruler of France. After the treaty of peace with England, the first act of the French government was the annexation of Piedmont; and the same system of aggrandisement which had appeared in the former government of that country, reappeared under the Consulate with renewed vigour.

It is not necessary to dilate on the conduct of France towards Switzerland, but it excited at that time, in England, a powerful sensation, and even a feeling of detestation for the treatment of that unfortunate and devoted country.

The continuance of the French armies in Holland was totally inconsistent with the principles on

which the treaty of Amiens had been negotiated, and with the engagements that subsisted between France and Holland.

The demand of the French government to lay on this country a restriction on the liberty of the press, and a desire expressed by Bonaparte that all the emigrants who had taken refuge in England — who had, on the faith of our government, placed themselves under our protection, should be sent out of the island, were repulsive to public feeling. The First Consul, moreover, was so absurd, as formally to require that he should send agents to England for various pretended purposes. When this was refused, these persons were smuggled in the train of the ambassador, and instructions were given them to take measures for ascertaining the soundings of ports, and for obtaining all possible information on military matters.

Such proceedings on the part of the First Consul manifested a determination to introduce, in defiance of our refusal, authorised emissaries into the arsenals and ports of Britain, in order to prepare during peace the most effectual means for our annoyance and destruction in time of war. To have conceded this would have been nothing more nor less than surrendering beforehand the rights and means of national defence.

Such seem to have been some of the reasons that induced public opinion, so alive to, and so apprehensive of, the power of France, to enter again

into hostilities with that country, or rather with the ambitious man that directed its destinies.

After the victory obtained by the French at Austerlitz, the situation of Great Britain was not such as to excite sanguine expectations for the future. The numerous armies, acknowledged talents, military skill, and formidable preparations of the Emperor Napoleon, together with his well-known hostility to the commercial and naval superiority of Britain, were sufficient to excite greater apprehension than had perhaps been felt at any time in this country since the dawn of civilisation and public opinion. Although at this time public credit was great, and a paper circulating medium assisted much the wants of the people, and eased them from the pressure of taxation, yet the depreciation of the currency, the dearness of provisions, the impossibility of going on continually in the system of loans, and the spirit of discontent in Ireland, were of great moment. To this may be added the union of Spain with France, and the junction of the squadrons of those nations. The spirit of the people, however, rose superior to all these difficulties, and public opinion was decidedly pronounced in favour of a war, to preserve national independence. The victory of Trafalgar, which happened about this period, restored, in some measure, confidence to the public, and prevented any successful attempt at invasion.

Hostilities between the two countries continued

without the appearance of a termination, until the French Emperor undertook his gigantic expedition to Russia in 1812, the ultimate result of which is well known.

After the entire overthrow of his army, the first abdication of Napoleon in 1814, his again resigning the throne in 1815, and the final accession of Louis XVIII. to the throne of France, public opinion underwent an entire change with regard to future hostilities with that country. The apprehension entertained for upwards of a century by England, of the possibility of invasion from France, and of the ambition and love of conquest of her ruler, seemed to subside, from the following natural conclusion,—that if France, during the height of her power and military fame under Napoleon (an individual possessed of greater means, loftier ambition, superior military talent, and more inveterate hostility to this country, than was likely to fall, for some ages, to the lot of any other ruler,) was ununable to effect an invasion of England, or to check permanently her commercial greatness, there could exist but little probability for the future that any foreign aggression could ensue, and consequently that this country had no cause to apprehend danger from France.

Public opinion in Great Britain being divested of this apprehension, a considerable and important change took place in the politics of this country, which, if not perceived at once, may

be observed at no distant period. Not being occupied by foreign hostilities, the national mind will be directed with greater attention to the internal state of the country,—to an acute and jealous investigation of every occurrence at home connected with the public service. It is possible that this turn of public opinion may not become apparent for some time; it is also possible that unforeseen political occurrences may arise on the Continent or elsewhere, that may cause its operation to be for a while suspended *; but there is little doubt, that such will be the ultimate direction of public opinion. Within the period which we have been considering, from the beginning of the reign of George III. to his death, very considerable advances were made in Great Britain, in Europe, and in other parts of the world, in the formation of requisites for civilisation.

* It might happen that another power should arise in Europe to excite the same apprehension of invasion in England, and the same jealousy in public opinion, that was felt with regard to France some years ago. There seems, however, little probability of this being the case, and it may be looked upon as a theoretical supposition. Little apprehension or reasonable grounds seem likely to be created in England from the danger of invasion by any foreign state. Great Britain seems placed in that desirable situation, that she can neither receive dominion from, or inflict it on, any state of Europe.

CHAPTER XIV.

PRESENT STATE OF CIVILISATION IN BRITAIN.

Present State of Society contrasted with that of the last Century. — Former Indecorum of Manners. — Street Outrages. — Deficient Police. — Horrible Frequency of Capital Punishments. — Gibbets in the Highways. — Feeble Attempts in 1763 to organise a Constabulary Force. — Destitute Class. — Alteration in the Proportion of the several Classes of Society. — Tendency of the last War, and the Increase of the Public Debt, to augment the Middle Class and to diminish the Upper. — Effects of Steam Power. — Condition of the Working Class. — Personal Property.

In the preceding pages we have shown, that the increase of civilisation in Great Britain has chiefly arisen from the industry and commercial activity of the population, and the liberal form of government that has been the result.

Since the reign of George III., time has been pregnant with most important events. These, however, are so fresh in the memory of every one, that recapitulation is needless. In every instance they have confirmed the paramount influence of public opinion, and the increase of civilisation. Another reason presents itself for not touching on these several events: they are so near to the pre-

sent time, have occupied so much the minds of men, and have been so warmly applauded or condemned by political parties, that to enlarge on them might have the appearance of political partisanship, which it has been the writer's anxious desire to avoid in these pages.

Let us therefore proceed to take a bird's-eye view of the present state of civilisation in England, after which our attention will be directed to the condition of the most prominent states of Europe, and of the world.

The extraordinary improvement that has taken place of late years in this island may be ascertained by comparing the present state of society to that which is known to have existed within the last century. Let us advert to the general coarseness of manners formerly prevalent. We will not go so far back as the reign of the Stuarts, when a chief justice sitting on the bench could vituperate the accused before him in the grossest terms*, but come to a more recent period.† The wit and sarcasm of Addison and Steele were levelled against that general indecorum of manners which then characterised society. Novels and dramatic pieces current in that day could not, in their original state, be tolerated for a moment at the present time. The grossest habits

* Address of C. J. Coke to Sir Walter Raleigh:—"Monster, viper, spider of hell," &c.

† Some of the following remarks are derived from an able paper by Mr. W. Weir, in Knight's "London."

were then common, and permitted in the best circles. Inebriety and a disregard of the decencies of life were the order of the day. That high, and even fastidious, sense of honour, propriety, and decorum which gives tone and elegance to society at present, from the highest personage in the realm to the verge of the lower class, were then unknown. Even in Italy, where a lax system of morality prevails, a sense of the elegant and beautiful, so generally diffused, and so sedulously cultivated by all classes, supplies, in some degree, the want of a sterner and more moral code. In the present state of society in Great Britain, we have the advantage of the former without the alloy of the latter. Within little more than half a century, the absence of literary or artistical tastes, the want of delicacy and decorum, and the rude and coarse amusements which were run after by the bulk of even the highest and most opulent classes in this country, till the middle of the 18th century, mainly contributed to the frequent acts of violence which present such a startling picture of social insecurity.* Want of order, and deficiency in police regulations, made the metropolis of England, within the last sixty years, and all the other

* The savage scenes at Hockley in the Hole, the brutal scenes at the Cockpit, the swindling at the Bowling Alley of Marylebone and elsewhere, and the vast number of small gambling houses, at which all comers were received, and which all men from the highest gentlemen to menial servants nightly frequented, are evidences of the state of society in the eighteenth century. — *Knight's London.*

large towns in Great Britain, most insecure at night, and even during the day.

It would ill suit the object of our remarks to amplify this subject; brief facts, as in note below*, will best illustrate the condition of the metropolis. The riots of 1780 are evidence of the state of the police, and of the respect for private property and security of individuals.

Danger in perambulating the streets, annoyance to respectable persons, particularly females, and other public grievances arising from deficiency in the police, are so well known to have existed until within very few years, that it would be unnecessary to enter more fully into them, particularly as they are no longer felt, and the admirable constabulary system now introduced, and adopted in nearly every large town in the empire, has added much to the

* "In 1778 there was a battle on Blackfriars Bridge between a party of soldiers and a band of smugglers, who made the Fleet Prison the depôt for their run goods for several years without molestation. In this contest the soldiers were only partially successful."

"On the 4th of June, 1779, George III.'s birth-day, some sailors quarrelled with a Jew, who retired to Duke's Place, followed by the men, who attacked his house, and two others, threw every thing out of the windows, broke the furniture, tore the beds, and left the house a perfect ruin; with the furniture three children sick of the small-pox were also thrown out of the window."

"The coaches that started from London when any celebrated highwayman was known to have taken the road, were attended by volunteer guards, who were paid for the occasion."—*Knight's Picture of London.*

comfort and security of social life, as well as to the debt of gratitude we owe to those by whom it was instituted.

Let us allude to another topic arising from the improved state of society; that is, the infrequency of capital punishments now prevalent, when compared to former times — a manifest proof of the increase of civilisation. In this remark we hope not to be misunderstood, or thought to insinuate that the mawkish feeling, which asserts that an atrocious violater of the laws of his country is not to suffer the penalty of his crimes, can be vindicated. Far from it: the fault sometimes in human nature is, to go from one extreme to the other, and to imagine that, because too many capital punishments in the last century took place, all ought now to be abolished. Much as society is improved, it has not yet reached such a point of perfection. Although our laws were said to be formerly written in blood, care must be taken they are not now written in milk and water. To come, however, to the question of the singular change that has taken place in capital punishments since the increase of civilisation.

Harrison * states, that in the reign of Henry VIII. there were hanged 72,000 rogues and thieves (besides other malefactors). This makes about two thousand a year. Yet Harrison com-

* Book iii. chap. 11.

plains of the relaxation of the laws, and laments that so *few* rogues were punished in his time. Our vulgar prepossession, says Hume *, in favour of the morals of former and rude ages, is very absurd and ill founded. Harrison states (chap. 10.), that there were computed to be ten thousand gipsies in England; a species of banditti introduced in the reign of Henry VIII., and adds, "there will be no way of extirpating them by the ordinary course of justice. The queen must employ martial law against them." At present, the use of martial law would not be tolerated without strong motives. However arbitrary its exercise might have been, it appears that nobody, in the age of Elizabeth, entertained any jealousy from its adoption.

A document, preserved by Strype, written by an eminent justice of the peace for Somersetshire †, near the close of Queen Elizabeth's reign, when the authority of that princess may be supposed fully corroborated by time, contains an account of the disorders that then prevailed in the above county. The author says, that forty persons had been executed in that county, in a year, for robberies, thefts, and other felonies; thirty-five burnt in the hand; thirty-seven whipped; one hundred and eighty-three discharged; that those who were discharged were most wicked and desperate persons, who never could come to any good, because they would

* Hume's Hist. England, Appendix iii.

† A. D. 1596.

not work; that, notwithstanding the great number of indictments, not the fifth part of the felonies committed in the county were brought to a trial. The greater number escaped censure, either from the superior cunning of the felons, or the remissness of the magistrates.

The number of rapines committed by the infinite number of idle, wicked, wandering people, were intolerable to the poor countrymen, and obliged them to keep a perpetual watch over their sheep-folds, their pastures, their woods, and their corn-fields. The other counties in England were in no better condition than Somersetshire; many of them were even in a worse.

There were at least three or four hundred able-bodied vagabonds in every county, who lived by theft and rapine, and who formed themselves into troops of about sixty, and committed spoil on the inhabitants. Strype adds, that if all the felons of the kind were assembled, they would be able, if reduced to good subjection, to give the greatest army her Majesty had a strong battle; that the magistrates themselves were intimidated from executing the laws on them; and that there were instances of justices of the peace, who, after giving sentence against rogues, had stopped the execution of their own sentence, on account of the danger which hung over them from the confederation of the felons.*

It is unnecessary to go so far back as the early

* Strype, Appendix iii.

part of the reign of Elizabeth, when England had not one-third of the present population, and when the catalogue of punishments presents a frightful amount: let us look back only to the close of the last, or commencement of the present century. How numerous do we find the capital punishments! Much good in this respect has been done to the cause of humanity in the abolition of one-pound notes, which tempted forgery, then subject to the penalty of death. Other benefits have also accrued in a monetary point of view.

"London seems to have been as thick set with these trophies and monuments of human depravity as the Greek towns with monuments of the contest at Marathon. There are many who remember that one of the most striking sights that presented themselves to foreigners as they approached by sea was, that of gibbets erected along the shore at Blackwall. About the middle of the last century, says the Annual Register for 1763, by whatever route you entered the metropolis, rows of gibbets met the eye of the traveller. All the gibbets in the Edgeware Road, on which the malefactors were hung in chains, were cut down by persons unknown. This conjures up the image of a long avenue planted with gallows-trees instead of elms or poplars, an assemblage of pendent criminals, not exactly 'thick as leaves that strew the brook in Vallombrosa;' but frequent as those whose feet, tickling Sancho's nose when he essayed to sleep in the cork forest, drove

him from tree to tree in search of an empty bough. In those days the approach to London, on all sides, seems to have been through serried files of gibbets, growing closer and more thronged as the distance from the city diminished, till they and their occupants arranged themselves in rows of ghastly and grinning sentinels along both sides of the principal avenues." *

These grim warders are now supplanted by cheerful posts of gas lights, not unaptly affording a simile to the wonderful change from barbarism to a state of civilisation and refinement.

It seems that nothing like a regular system for prevention of crime or violence existed in the metropolis within a century. "In 1763 an attempt was made to organise something like a constabulary force in Westminster and the rest of London not comprehended within the city walls. This announcement is recorded by the chroniclers of the day, with an air of importance, contrasting so forcibly with the insufficiency of these regulations, as to leave a strong impression of the utter want of protection which must previously have existed. We read in the Annual Register, 1763, March 24th:—'Every possible step is taken to put the civil power of the city and liberty of Westminster on a most respectable footing. A horse patrol, under the direction of a magistrate †, is fixed upon

* Knight's "London." † Sir John Fielding.

the several roads near the metropolis, for the protection of his Majesty's subjects; this patrol consists of eight persons, well mounted and armed.'"

"A great point of dissimilarity between London in the eighteenth century and London in the nineteenth is, the comparatively greater number, during the former period, of that destitute and unemployed class who raised their heads in the morning, not only uncertain where they were to lay them at night, but where or how the first food to satisfy the cravings of hunger was to be obtained. In all populous cities there is a class of this kind — persons who, either from natural incompetency for continuous regulated labour have sunk down to indigence, or from half starvation have lost that vigour and elasticity of spirit, which is the main-spring of industry; and who, between the stings of want and loss of self-respect, have grown callous to the sentiments of morality. It is among the members of this class that the ready tools of vice are ever to be found. If the city, in the nooks and corners of which they burrow, is of old standing, they become hereditary, and form a sort of pariah *caste*. We can trace them in London at an earlier period than that to which our attention is directed, among the young brood nestling among the cinders of the glass-house in De Foe's 'Colonel Jack,' and the adult members of the fraternity occasionally noticed in that narrative. A few years ago, London was 'startled from its propriety,' by learning that

a horde of these indigenous gipsies of the city had occupied the unclosed arches of the viaduct leading to one of the new bridges."*

The long war waged by England against Napoleon diminished the upper and augmented the middle class, by the depression of the currency arising from the suspension of cash payments, and the subsequent restoration of the circulating medium to a healthy state by the resumption of gold as the standard of value. The substitution of paper, and the great expenditure occasioned by the war, raised the price of produce, and increased that of land beyond what could be maintained when a sound currency was restored; and, when the latter was effected, sale and subdivision of extensive estates followed.

This change in the value of produce, and depression of landed property, does not appear to have been anticipated to its full extent. In so large and wealthy a nation as our's, there are no doubt exceptions to this. One wealthy person may purchase an estate of great magnitude, and thereby augment his ample possessions; but such instances are not in sufficient number to militate against our position. Now admitting a subdivision to be the general result of the sale of large estates, it follows that, as the upper class diminishes, the middle class increases, not in the same, but in a greater proportion.†

* Knight's "London."

† If A. of the upper class sells his estate to B., C., and D. of

It cannot be denied that such a result, as far as the upper ranks are concerned, must be regretted: whatever reduces an individual to lessen his expenditure, and to fall from that class in which he has moved and considered himself a member, cannot, of course, be productive of happy feelings, under whatever circumstances the change may take place. This cause and effect have been for some years in operation; and as a considerable amount of landed property continues charged heavily by mortgages or settlements, it seems clear that the like change will continue gradually to take place. At the same time it must be admitted that, during the late war, under a mistaken impression that the value of land in rent would continue to rise, or at least remain stationary, greater expenditure was indulged in by many in the upper class than seemed warranted by foresight. The increase of income and of disbursements in some of the upper class in that period, might not be prejudicial to the nation, inasmuch as it would promote industry, and distribute wealth throughout the country; but it was necessarily injurious to the parties by whom it was indulged. Those persons who had been prudent

the middle class, it may be said the former receives the amount, and therefore continues as before; but this is not usually the case. If A. sells, he does so because he requires money, and he usually sells to pay off incumbrances, debts, children's fortunes, &c., and then he may fall from the upper class.

enough not to expend the entire of their income increased by the war, but who, remaining satisfied, laid by the surplus arising from their enlarged rents, would, on the resumption of cash payments, find themselves gainers, both by the suspension and the resumption, as the accumulation of their surplus rents during the war would more than counterbalance the subsequent depreciation of produce. So far, the upper class of the landed interest, who suffered by the change, could not, with any colour of justice, complain. Neither have those who purchased considerable property during the war any reason of complaint, as they purchased on speculation. If the said speculation did not turn out as favourably as the sanguine proprietor might anticipate, it surely cannot be expected that either public opinion or the country could sanction any measure to keep up the high price of produce which would not benefit equally all classes of society.*

The general use of steam power, the great extent of capital, and the growing civilisation of other

* If any doubts are entertained on the question of the gradual melting of the upper into the middle class, let the vast amount of money advanced on mortgage on land, either by individuals or by companies, be taken into account. If A. have an estate worth thirty thousand pounds, and that estate is mortgaged for twenty thousand, it is clear that in fact A. has only ten thousand, although nominally in possession of the whole estate. The result, therefore, of a mortgage or sale is nearly the same to the community, but not to the individual, especially should he not be able to redeem.

nations and communities, are also fast increasing the middle class and diminishing the two others; consequently, the influence of public opinion is augmented. Civilisation will advance at a giant's pace. An enthusiastic observer of mankind remarks that, compared with former periods, nations are advancing at the rate of a century a-day. To speak, however, in sober earnestness, it is evident that improvement in all communities may be anticipated to such an extent as to set all reasoning by analogy at defiance.

"We have often thought," says an eloquent and philosophical modern writer, "that the motion of the public mind in our country resembles that of the sea when the tide is rising. Each successive wave rushes forward, breaks, and rolls back; but the great flood is steadily coming in. A person who looks on them only for five minutes, might fancy that they were rushing capriciously to and fro; but when he keeps his eye on them for a quarter of an hour, and sees one sea-mark disappear after another, it is impossible for him to doubt of the general direction in which the ocean is moved. Just such has been the course of events in England. In the history of the national mind, which is in truth the history of the nation, we must carefully distinguish between that recoil which regularly follows every advance, and a great general ebb."*

* Critical and Historical Essays, by T. B. Macaulay.

Without entering into any dissertation on the benefits arising to mankind from the use of steam-power, or indulging in trite remarks on the subject, we may very briefly consider how far the general adoption of that power will affect the relative proportions of the several classes of society. The operation seems to take place in the following manner. Commercial and manufacturing industry and trade are the chief and leading agents for pouring wealth into all communities. Steam-power increases all these in a prodigious manner; indeed, in a ratio almost beyond calculation. By increasing the means and facility for production, the value of the article so produced is diminished considerably. The natural consequence of this cheap production is, that it can be disposed of at a much easier rate, and consequently a much greater demand is occasioned. From their low price, articles of necessity or enjoyment are attainable by those in the poorer classes, by whom formerly they could not be obtained, and who are in consequence induced to labour with greater earnestness and perseverance to procure them. Thus steam-power increases wealth, not only in manufacturers, but in consumers.

"That an abundant supply creates an additional demand*," is a trite remark, but it confirms the argument. If in former days, and in almost barbarous times, the little trade or manufacture that existed, rendered the towns where they were exercised

* M. Say on Political Economy.

wealthy when compared to the rest of the community; if the Hanse towns (the few free places on the continent) and the republics of Holland, Genoa, Venice, and Florence, were able by those means to form themselves a middle class, and to enjoy advantages in many respects superior to the benighted and barbarous and despotic governments by whom they were surrounded; if this occurred two hundred years ago in these petty states, and rendered them flourishing, what can be expected from a people more active, fully possessed of the requisites for civilisation, besides a knowledge and command of steam-power, the free navigation of the seas, with colonies and possessions in every part of the world, all requiring to be supplied with goods from the mother country! The creation of superabundant capital cannot but lift many out of the lower into the middle class; of course the same operation will advance a few into the upper class. Probably the cause already mentioned may be more powerful in diminishing the upper class, than those now stated in causing its increase. If allowed to refer to the simile of the three lakes in the introductory chapter, representing the upper, middle, and lower classes of society, we should say, the flow is constant and steady from the upper and lower lake into the middle, which has now nearly drained the upper, and may probably, in the course of time, by the aid of steam-power, very considerably lessen the lower.

In reference to the lower class it may be re-

marked, that although their condition is ultimately improved by the use of steam-power and by the increase of capital, yet it may, and often does, occur in many districts, that the abrupt substitution of steam-power for manual labour occasions very serious injury and severe privations to those who are either thrown out of work entirely, or lose in part their former occupations or employments. It cannot be denied, and must occasion great regret, that this most serious evil does arise in many parts of the country where steam-power is in operation. Every care and attention ought in consequence to be afforded to those of the labouring classes who are placed in such a predicament; and this assistance ought especially to be rendered by those whose wealth is augmented by that very power by which the others are deprived of their habitual occupations, and are even sometimes unable by their labour to earn their daily subsistence.*

It has been said that machinery, generally used, has made England one vast mass of superficial splendour, covering a body of festering discontent and misery. A gentleman entitled to great attention, and holding a high official situation, said in the House, "It was one of the most melancholy

* From these circumstances some relaxation in the poor-law system seems not only desirable, but called forth by humanity, justice and policy. Much in future will depend on the education and moral character given to the working population in those districts where steam power is much in use.

features in the social state of the country, that while there was a decrease in the consuming powers of the people, and an increase in the privations of the labouring and operative classes, there was at the same time a constant increase of capital."* Another speaker, much respected in the House, said, "Side by side appear in fearful and unnatural contrast the greatest amount of opulence and the most appalling mass of misery." †

Observations coming from such authorities cannot be passed over unnoticed. The mistake in these assertions has arisen from the comparison made of the wealth created, with the mass of poverty endured; but surely these remarks cannot be intended to assert, that the poverty of the lower or operative classes arises from the wealth created by others, or that those classes are not in the aggregate at present in a better situation than in former times. No doubt the privations of the labouring classes are occasionally severe; and every humane mind will do its utmost to alleviate their sufferings, and spread among them the enjoyments that can be afforded in food, shelter, and education.

When, however, we consider the constant and severe toil to which the mass of mankind in former times were liable, the privations they endured, the famine and plagues and destitution that were suffered, it is impossible not to arrive at the conclu-

* Gladstone's speech, 1843.

† C. Buller's speech, April 6. 1843.

sion, that, in the present state of civilisation, the condition of the lower ranks is superior to that of the same ranks in former days. Compare the situation of the labouring classes in England, where steam-power is so prevalent, with those in the south of Italy, or wherever steam-power is little known: will the mass of the labouring class in the latter communities have a greater abundance of food, better clothing, or be more sheltered from the weather than in England?*

One of the extraordinary results arising from the present state of civilisation and use of steam-power, is the vast increase of what is styled personal property; a species of property that is both the cause and effect of civilisation.† Perhaps nothing will serve to mark the progress of society more than the inconceivable increase of this description of wealth. In the far-gone days of ignorance, if not of barbarism, this species of property

* It seems that the average situation of the working population can in some measure be ascertained from the statement, that in former days the usual wages of a labourer were the value of a gallon loaf per day. At the present price of corn a gallon loaf might be sold for about one shilling. Few labourers in England have now, it is to be hoped, only six shillings a week wages; and the other articles of convenience or luxury are now much cheaper than formerly. It would appear, therefore, that the condition of the labourer is improved. Let us hope it may yet be much ameliorated.

† The vast amount of this property in Great Britain at the present time exceeds belief. The funds, East India stock, other stocks, mortgages, canal and railway shares, &c., are beyond enumeration.

was scarcely known, and not estimated, as appears from the statute book. The law in England regarding this property, evinces the little value in which it was formerly held.* Old writers on English law, Britton in particular, scarcely mention personal property. Other legal authorities, Bracton and Fleta, allude to it occasionally, but treat it very lightly. This species of property, in those days, appears scarcely of sufficient importance to deserve notice. It was nearly impossible for our rude ancestors to create this kind of wealth without commerce or manufacturing industry. So long as want of confidence, or deficiency in the laws to preserve property of this description inviolate, is found, so long will that energy and activity inherent in mankind remain dormant. In the dawn of civilisation, the benefit arising from confidence in monetary transactions, as well as public credit, were little appreciated, if not unknown altogether; activity would not be prevalent where its fruits could not be secured.

That increase of personal property augments the sum of enjoyment and happiness, can scarcely be doubted. In proportion as this sort of wealth is formed, so does it spread ease, comfort, and even luxury amongst those by whom they were formerly unknown. If, by the creation of personal property, ten thousand families are every year (more or less

* See Blackstone's Commentaries.

alters not the argument) lifted from the lower class, and placed in the middle, it cannot be denied that such an operation may much benefit the ten thousand families mentioned, without in the slightest degree occasioning any injury to other members of the community. While individuals are enriched, an addition is made to the mass of capital in the country, and a stimulus given to national industry.

The great increase of personal property seems to have been perceived by the late Emperor of France. He says —

"Formerly, only one sort of property was known: that was, the possession of land; another description of property has arisen of late, that of industry, that rivals the former, which may be styled the contest of the acres against the loom — of the weaver's cottage against embattled turrets. Yet," he added, "it is in consequence of the want of foresight in not acknowledging this great revolution in all descriptions of property, in the obstinacy of shutting one's eyes upon such truths, that such follies are every day committed and such violent commotions are risked. Mankind, by this change, has experienced an entire subversion, and all is confusion till things settle down: this is, in two sentences, the cause of all the agitation now in the world. The ballast of the vessel is changed; it has been taken from the fore part to the rear of the hold: hence those gales of dissatisfaction in the people that may shipwreck the vessel on the first squall; yet such is

the obstinacy of rulers, that they go on as usual without trimming the vessel anew." *

At the conclusion of hostilities in 1814, an account was furnished by a statistical writer, on the amount of personal property, and also on the relative proportions of the several classes of society to each other in Great Britain and Ireland. If this proportion of the income of the several classes is correctly laid down in his account, which has never been doubted, how incalculably must the aggregate income of the middle class have increased since that period!

AVERAGE OF THE INCOMES OF THE PEOPLE IN GREAT BRITAIN AND IRELAND.

	Number of heads of families.	Aggregate of yearly income.
UPPER CLASS.		
Average of the yearly income of those who have 3000*l.* and upwards, including bishops, princes of the royal family, and all individuals except the sovereign -	1,436	£8,775,000
MIDDLE CLASS.		
Average of the yearly income of those who have under 3000*l.*, and not less than 150*l.* - -	1,596,151	240,329,665
LOWER CLASS.		
Average of the yearly income of those forming the lower class, that have an income of 60*l.*	1,904,193	181,270,707
Average of those of the lower class that receive assistance, and are not possessed of income	387,000	9,871,000

* "Jadis on ne connaissait qu'une espèce de propriété, celle

Thus it appears that the aggregate of the income of the middle class exceeded that of the upper in the proportion of twenty-nine to one; and the income of the upper part of the lower class exceeded that of the upper in the proportion of twenty-one to one.

With an amount of capital formed by the means already mentioned—with a middle class powerful and numerous beyond example, and such as was never before known in Europe, and of which history affords no parallel—with the elements of civilisation spread through the country, which can never be diffused too widely, so long as they emanate from the several attributes so often mentioned—a revolution or convulsion, in which property would be endangered, seems most improbable. Political

du terrein; il est survenu une nouvelle, celle de l'industrie, aux prises en ce moment avec la première." "Il appellait cette grande butte de nos jours, la guerre des champs contre les comptoirs, celle des crenaux contre les métiers. C'est pourtant (disait-il) pour n'avoir point voulu reconnaître cette grande révolution dans la propriété, pour s'obstiner à fermer les yeux sur de telles vérités, qu'on fait tant de sottises aujourd'hui et que l'on s'expose à tant de bouleversemens. Le monde a éprouvé un grand déplacement, et il cherche à se resserrer: voilà en deux mots, terminait-il, toute la clé de l'agitation universelle qui nous tourmente. On a désarrimé le vaisseau, transporté du lest de l'avant à l'arrière, et de là ces furieuses oscillations qui peuvent amener le naufrage à la première tempête, et l'on s'obstine à vouloir le manœuvrer de coutume, sans avoir obtenu un équilibre nouveau."—*Journal des Conversations de l'Empereur, par Las Cases*, vol. iv. part vii. p. 91.

* Colquhoun's Treatises on the Wealth and Resources of the British Empire, 4th edition, p. 124.

changes may take place, and partial tumults or petty excitements may arise from temporary pressure amongst the working classes, whose situation, particularly in the extensive manufacturing districts, ought to be regarded with great tenderness and commiseration. No doubt popular clamour may occasionally raise its voice; but no commotion is likely to make any alteration in the state of society, or occasion a change in the property of individuals or of the nation. The aggregate of the middle class is too powerful, and too well-informed, not at once to crush any such attempts; and the lower class, though certainly wielding the brute force of the nation, are in the hands of the former, and under their control.

It was not inaptly observed by Napoleon, "The English constitution is built on a rock, but the government of France entirely on sand."* In this remark the Emperor evinced his knowledge of our country. The British constitution may have its faults; it is of man's formation, and therefore fallible; but having been moulded into its present form by the voice of public opinion, it is perfectly secure. If any change in its representation, or in other matters, is required by the voice of the country, that voice must be obeyed. An opposition may be attempted, but no struggle, no convulsion will ensue; like the "Open Sesame"

* Conversations de Sainte Helène: Las Cases' Journal.

in the Arabian Nights, the public voice is heard, and the thing is done

Before this chapter is concluded, one observation may be made in regard to the general opinion that the condition of mankind is changed according to changes in forms of government, instead of the people, in proportion to their civilisation, changing the form of government.

In a barbarous state, it is true, the people may be kept in ignorance by absolute power preventing facility of intercourse, and retaining the community in ignorance and superstition. But where some advance from this benighted state has been made, a popular form of government gradually arises with the growing information of the people. Many enlightened men and philosophers of the last century believed and asserted that a mere change in the form of government would at once ameliorate the condition of the people, secure their freedom, and preserve inviolate the rights to which all mankind are entitled. From this false notion may arise the continued failure of all attempts, by sudden changes in the form of government, to alter the social condition of the people, to elevate their character, increase their happiness, or avert the numerous evils incident to their situation. On the contrary, these ameliorations in a society advancing

* This, written in 1828, was confirmed in 1829 by the Emancipation Bill, in 1830 by the Revolution in France, in 1832 by the Reform Bill.

in civilisation, can only be effected by themselves. The government may assist their endeavours by encouraging education and industry, but the elements of civilisation can only be obtained by the exertions of the people. "The treasures of knowledge, the powers of art, the triumphs of science, constitute a permanent addition to the inheritance of mankind; and the art of printing has apparently given them a durable existence, and for ever preserved for future generations the acquisitions of the past."*

But a very slight acquaintance with men is sufficient to show, that it is neither in these acquisitions, nor the power they confer, that the secret either of national strength or individual elevation is to be found. Intellectual cultivation alone, it appears from history, is not always consistent with moral elevation; the spread of knowledge may be attended by diffusion of corruption; the triumphs of art have not uniformly prevented degradation of character. So frequently has this failure formerly attended the greatest intellectual efforts of man, that, till the last sixty years, it had been imagined by many philosophers, and experienced observers, that moral elevation and national greatness were not always the concomitants of arts and sciences. Bacon observes, "In the infancy of states, arms do

* See Alison, Hist. of Europe, vol. x. p. 937., to whom so much is due for his able remarks.

prevail; in its progress, arms and learning; afterwards commerce and mechanical arts."

To show that a change in the form of government, unless the nation is prepared by civilisation, is not likely to benefit the people, let us make the following reflection. When the germs of the French revolution first appeared, it was almost universally imagined by philosophers in this country, and in other parts of Europe, that a remedy was at length discovered for all the moral and even physical evils of humanity. The more the writings of the so-called wise men of that day are examined, the more does it appear that this persuasion was the corner-stone of their system. Condorcet expressly states, in his Life of Voltaire, that such was the cardinal point of his philosophy. Nor was such a doctrine confined to that age or country. It is at present the prevailing, in fact the almost universal, creed in America, which hardly any writer, even of the highest class, ventures to deny; and it is even a doctrine which will be found to lie at the root of the principles of those numerous parties in Great Britain, who aim at ameliorating the condition of mankind by merely altering their political institutions. It is therefore important to inquire to what extent this sentiment is well founded; to ascertain how far it is consistent with the experience of human nature, and how far it is warranted by the recorded annals of mankind.

The entire fallacy of such an opinion is demon-

strated in the most decisive manner. A promise of amelioration by the change in the government was made by all the authors of the day. The doctrine was repeated in their writings and speeches, till it had passed into a sort of universal maxim. It was the ground on which they rested their legislation and excused their cruelties. "You can never," they said, "give the people too much power: there is not the slightest danger of their abusing it." This assertion might be true, if applied to a population thoroughly imbued with the elements of civilisation; but was most false, when referred to a vicious, atheistical, and bloodthirsty rabble, either in France or elsewhere. "Tyranny," they said, "in former ages has arisen entirely from the vices of kings, the ambition of ministers, and the arts of priests:" they forgot to add, "and from the ignorance, bigotry, and immorality of the people." "When," continued they, "the great mass of the people are admitted to govern the nation, such evils will at once cease, because those will be governors whose interest it is to be well governed. Possibly much suffering may be inflicted, and injustice committed, on the part of demagogues, in efforts to secure themselves these blessings; but such evils are temporary, and not for a moment to be weighed against the permanent advantages of republican institutions."

In all this, they forgot the state of the lower class. What must have been the anguish of these

persons, who, after promulgating and acting on such principles, found themselves and their country involved in unheard-of miseries from their effects! — when they saw the people, whom they believed to be so innocent, instantly, on the acquisition of power, steeped in atrocities infinitely greater than had ever disgraced the government of kings or the councils of priests. It is not surprising that anxiety to avoid witnessing such fruits from their efforts should have led numbers even of the most enlightened to commit suicide; that Roland should have been found dead by the way-side, with a writing on his breast, declaring that "he cared not to live in a world stained by so many crimes;" and that Condorcet, who had carried the dream of perfectability so far as to have anticipated, from the combined discoveries of science and the stilling of the angry passions of the human breast by the spread of freedom, an extension of human life to a much greater age, should have been led to shorten his own existence by poison.

It is repugnant to the sentiments by which most persons are at present actuated, to look back to the horrors of the French Revolution; but in the present instance, the results elucidate so forcibly the theory attempted to be laid down in reference to the elements of civilisation, that it was expedient to make the above reference. The subject of France will be considered at some length in the second volume; and it may only be remarked here, that

nothing would be more unfair than to attribute to an entire nation the crimes or follies of a lower class, totally deficient in every requisite for self-government.

Among the results to be anticipated from the influence of popular clamour and the repression of public opinion, may be mentioned a general passion for war and foreign conquest—for those very evils, which in the middle ages were attributed, and probably with justice, to the ambition of kings, the cruelty of priests, and the rivalry of ministers.

CHAPTER XV.

THE MONARCHICAL POWER.

Strength of Constitutional Authority. — Genuine Loyalty. — Opinion of Frederick the Great on the Sovereigns of his Day. — Uncertain Tenure of Despotism. — Succession of Females to the English Crown. — Necessity of upholding the Monarchical Power. — Effects of the Reform Bill. — Increase of Influence in the House of Commons. — Proper Functions of a Sovereign.

In the early part of this volume it has been observed, that when in all the nations of Europe, during a state of semi-barbarism, the feudal or baronial influence was suppressed, and superseded by the absolute power of the monarch, a very important step was gained in the progress of civilisation. In such times, the dominion of one person must have been preferable to that of a hundred petty tyrants, or to anarchy.

As civilisation becomes extended through the community, the sovereign is possessed of great influence from the very power of public opinion. Take the monarch's name, for example, in this country; it is indeed "a tower of strength," and has vast command over the minds of the people. What a difference between the regal office ruling

over a free people in a civilised community, and that of a despotic monarch controlling a semi-barbarous population!

There are in these days but few instances in Europe of the latter description, so much has information increased, and the exercise of arbitrary power diminished. In Great Britain we can scarcely find a single dwelling where the effigy of the sovereign is not placed, or a single heart in which affectionate anxiety is not felt for her happiness. In every town, mansion, hamlet, and cottage, the royal arms, and royal name, are exhibited. They are depicted in every species of manufacture. The sovereign's health and welfare and family are matters of constant solicitude; and the Queen's prosperity seems but a transcript of private happiness. Without entering into invidious comparisons, are any of these indications of affection and loyalty discernible in a despotic monarchy?

If we look at the monarchs in by-gone days of turmoil and barbarous exertion of power, we find them governing, not by law, but by absolute force. We see emperors and kings keeping down a slavish population by an ostentatious array of armed forces.

There is no necessity here to dilate on the uncertain tenure either of life or of power, remarkable in all despotism. The violent deaths of the Roman emperors, of the Russian autocrats, of the sultans in Turkey, and elsewhere, are melancholy evidences of this fact.

How different the situation of the sovereign of a free and civilised people, where public opinion is exercised by the community!

The following sentiments of Frederick the Great of Prussia, will show his opinion of the state of government on the Continent of Europe in his day:—

"It seems to be the error of most sovereigns to imagine that the multitude of human beings, who live under their sway, have been expressly created by the Almighty from a particular attention to the greatness, the happiness, or the pride of their monarchs, who are satisfied that their subjects are intended merely as the instruments and organs of their inordinate passions.

"Whenever the principle on which we found our thoughts or actions are fallacious, the consequences must be equally so; hence arises that inordinate desire in princes of bringing all they can under their dominion, and the imposts they lay on their people; hence the sloth, the pride, the injustice, and want of feeling or humanity, and all those vices that degrade human nature, that have been apparent in the monarchs that have ruled over nations.

"If sovereigns have in future the good sense to dispossess themselves of such erroneous ideas, and if they will go back to the first principles of monarchy, they would remain convinced that their high station is the work of the people. This principle once established, they ought to feel fully

convinced that the real glory of kings consists — not in oppressing and harassing their neighbours, not in adding thousands to their slaves, but in exercising the duties of their high station, and in fulfilling the intentions of those by whom they have been invested with their power, and to whom they are indebted for their exalted station."*

In giving this quotation from the sovereign of Prussia, there is no intention whatever to cast any blame on the monarchs of Europe at this time. Quite the reverse: it shows the state of things and the conduct of sovereigns in days gone by, when civilisation was far from being expanded in any state. There are very few exceptions at this day

* "Voici l'erreur de la plupart des princes; ils croient que Dieu a créé exprès et par une attention toute particulière à leur grandeur, leur félicité, et leur orgueil cette multitude d'hommes, dont le salut leur est commis, et que leurs sujets ne sont destinés qu'à être les instrumens et les ministres de leurs passions déréglées. Dès que le principe dont on part est faux, les conséquences ne peuvent être que vicieuses à l'infini, et de là ce desir ardent de tout envahir, de là la dureté des impôts dont le peuple est chargé, de là la paresse des princes, leur orgueil, leur injustice, leur inhumanité, leur tyrannie, et tous ces vices qui degradent la nature humaine. Si les princes se defaisaient de ces idées erronées, et qu'ils voulussent remonter jusqu'au but de leur institution, ils verraient que ce rang dont ils sont si jaloux, que leur elevation, n'est que l'ouvrage des peuples. Ce principe ainsi établi, il faudrait qu'ils sentissent que la vraie gloire des princes ne consiste point à opprimer leurs voisins, point à augmenter le nombre de leurs esclaves, mais à remplir le devoir de leurs charges, et à repondre en tout à l'intention de ceux qui les ont revêtus de leur pouvoir, et de qui ils tiennent la grandeur suprême." — *Œuvres de Frederic III., Roi de Prusse*, vol. iv.

in Europe, where sovereigns are not in a greater or less degree influenced by public opinion, and deem it their interest to promote the welfare and happiness of their subjects. Whence does this extraordinary change arise? From no other cause but the increase of information, and the enlargement of civilisation. Human nature is probably much the same in the nineteenth century as in the fifteenth or sixteenth; yet what a marked difference in the conduct of those who are at the head of each nation. Well might the monarchs of the present day, on the Continent of Europe, repeat the trite proverb, "*Tempora mutantur, nosque mutamur in illis.*"

The uncertainty of the tenure of the crown of England in the early days of our history is apparent, as well as the security of its possession since the Revolution of 1688; for no one can imagine that the attempts of the Pretender in 1715 and 1745 could for a moment endanger a dynasty called to the throne by the unanimous wish of the nation.

In Europe many sovereigns have been deprived of hereditary monarchy by the march of civilisation and the voice of public opinion. "In England, France, Belgium, Spain, Portugal, Greece, Russia, and Sweden, the princes who occupy the throne do not sit thereon by hereditary descent. This fact is incontestable, and worthy of remark. The royal family of England rests on the Revolution of 1688,

and on the non-hereditary substitution of the Nassaus for the Stuarts. In France it is the Orleans branch which reigns, in place of the elder one of Bourbon, called to the throne by hereditary descent. In Belgium, Leopold certainly does not draw his right from hereditary descent. In Spain, Queen Isabella does not reign in virtue of Salic hereditary descent. In Portugal, Queen Donna Maria owes her crown to the gracious grant of Don Pedro, and not to hereditary descent. In Greece, Otho is king, as Leopold is in Belgium. The Emperor Nicholas himself did not ascend the throne by hereditary descent. Inquire of the son of Bernadotte if his great grandfather had a crown in his patrimony. It is therefore true to say, that it is the smaller number of kings who hold their places from hereditary descent. All the rest hold them from other sources. Never was England more agitated than before the Revolution of 1688, and never more tranquil than after it. The wars of the Two Roses, the religious reactions, the death of Charles I., all took place before the period when William III. leaped lightly over hereditary descent. England did not consolidate her institutions, establish her liberty, and prepare her greatness, until after having given herself a non-hereditary king. In France, did the hereditary Kings prevent troubles and agitations? Was not the League commenced under Henry III., and the Fronde during the reign of Louis XIV.? Is not all the

past history of royalty in France marked by revolts, murders, and agitations of men and ideas? At no period of history has there been so much calm, happiness, and real progress, as under Louis Philippe, a non-hereditary king."*

The writer is anxious to avoid the defence or condemnation of any particular political principles or opinions, in any country whatever. He endeavours to inquire into and ascertain the progress of civilisation, and to avoid whatever may refer, in the remotest manner, to local politics either in his own or in any other country.

For the following interesting summary, connected with the succession of females to the British crown, and also for the concluding observations of this Chapter, we are indebted to one of the most valuable of our periodical publications.†

It is singular that, as far back as the Romans, the succession of females to the the crown has been acknowledged in England. It is mentioned as a peculiarity of this nation by Tacitus, who says, "*Neque sexum in imperiis discernunt*," so that it is clear the crown of England, even in those days, was inherited by females. Boadicea is mentioned by Blackstone as queen of Britain, *but he is mistaken when he says she held it by right of inheritance.* She

* Parisian Globe.

† See Quarterly Review, No. 117. p. 240. In applying the information contained in the above-named masterly article we have, here and there, used our own phraseology.

was the widow of the last king, and therefore did not inherit the crown; but it devolved on her as representative of her husband.

The deficiency in the requisites for civilisation will be manifold when we look at the injustice committed on the rightful heirs, either through fraud or violence. If such injustice could be tolerated towards the highest personage in the realm, what sort of justice or honesty could be found in the country or administered to the people? Though the principle of female succession to the crown of these realms has never been denied even from the earliest days, yet our history shows the want of civilisation in its remote period; for in practice it has happened, that from the Conquest to the accession of Mary, nearly five hundred years, every female heir to the throne has been deprived by violence of her regal rights, and in most cases this has been done by the next heir male. Thus we see violence and injustice in those days triumphing over right and law.

Let us come to facts. Matilda, the only surviving child of Henry I., was dispossessed by Stephen, and, after his death, she was passed over by her son. Philippa of Clarence and her issue, heirs to the crown after Richard II., were excluded by the usurpation of the next male, Henry IV., and his descendants. Elizabeth, the only surviving child of Edward IV., was set aside by the next male heir, her uncle Richard III., and afterwards by

Henry VII., who, though glad to make good his own bad title by his union with her, yet pretended he had the sole right, and affected to transmit the crown to his son Henry VIII. as heir of the Lancaster branch, though his real title was through the female line.

During the reign of George III., an attack was made against regal influence, in the well-known resolution of the House, "That the King's prerogative had increased, was increasing, and ought to be diminished." Popular assemblies, like individuals, sometimes make hasty and intemperate resolves, of which they afterwards repent. No Englishman who knows the history of his country, who is an admirer of its constitution, and who wishes to have it transmitted to posterity, can entertain any other sentiment than that the power and influence of the Crown are not too great, — that it ought in every possible manner to be upheld, and kept in full integrity of its rights; this we believe to be the sincere opinion and ardent desire of every man who is an admirer of the constitution, and a lover of his country.

Setting aside the reasons that induced one branch of the Legislature to remark on the other at the period mentioned, we will state very briefly why it appears that the public sentiment of the country is at present for maintaining inviolate the influence of the Crown. We repeat, that in the course of the present century a slow but a very steady

and progressive increase has taken place in the middle classes, and a decrease, not certainly in the same proportion, but still a decrease, has occurred in the numbers, the power, and influence of the upper class. This latter class, from its being possessed of wealth—being more in contact with, and more under the influence of, the Crown, will necessarily be inclined to maintain its dignity and prerogative. This inclination may continue, but the power has diminished. At the time when the resolution already alluded to passed the House of Commons, the upper class held so great a mass of property in close, or corporation, boroughs, as well as in counties, that their influence, much under the control of the sovereign, might possess undue weight in the Commons' House. Since that period the Reform Bill has passed, and their influence has also in a great measure passed away; not certainly without leaving a wreck behind, for the influence of wealth and of property must always tell, and may, when not arbitrarily exercised, be termed a legitimate influence. Yet it is certainly very different from that exercised in former times, and it cannot be seriously argued that the Reform Bill, called for by public opinion, did not add an immense power to the middle ranks of society, and take away an equal amount from the upper class. The result, as every one knows full well, has been, an unusual increase of influence in the House of Commons.

To counterbalance this increased influence, which might destroy the due equipoise of the several constituent portions of the Legislature, it seems most desirable, most in accordance with the spirit of our constitution and the progress of civilisation, that the power of the Crown in Britain should be preserved in its full integrity and purity. The writer feels strongly on this question, and is most anxious to be clearly understood. In his view of the constitution, the sovereign has, and ought to have, more weight than mere theorists usually admit. The theorists tell us that the sovereign has no will except in the choice of his ministers. Without entering into a disquisition on these nice points, we may venture to assert, that in the best and freshest times of the constitution the sovereign had more power than this theory would give him. The sovereign after some years ought to know more of the working of the machine of government than any person in the country. The centre of all business gravitates on the person wearing the crown, who is aware of precedent, and acquainted with motive, of which an individual minister, however able and well informed, may be ignorant. The elevated situation of the monarch enables the person wearing the crown to take large and general views, particularly of individual character, above any personal interests in one line of policy more than another. The sovereign can have no object in a choice of measures but the quiet of the government and the

good of the people, with whom the personal ease and happiness of the Crown are inseparably interwoven. Theorists may say what they please; but the sovereign of these realms, so placed, must have a real and substantial and constitutional influence. The monarch, it is said, can do little or nothing without the minister, but, in a healthy state of the constitution, can prevent much that the ministers might be inclined to do, and this is one of the important duties of the sovereign in the machine of the State. The knowledge of men, manners, and customs, can with ordinary good sense be more easily obtained by one at the head of the State, and in whom all business centres, than is generally thought; all this is so much ballast, keeping the vessel of the State steady in its bearing, by counteracting the levity of popular ministers, and of others forced by peculiar circumstances alone into public councils.* That constant ground-swell of murmuring and discontent, created either by the toil and hardships to which the majority of mankind are liable, or by the restlessness and ambition of others, and the periodical tempests of democratic insanity fed by popular clamour, to which Great Britain, and probably every country under the influence of civilisation, is liable, render it necessary that the regal prerogative should be firmly upheld. Even in those countries of Europe where the monarchical power is

* See Quarterly Review.

most uncontrolled, a very great amelioration has taken place, and is daily visible in the temper and conduct of the sovereigns towards the people under their care.

In our case, where the laws have so clearly defined the rights of the crown, let us take special care that those rights are neither disregarded, nor insidiously set aside. Our religion, our strength, our glory, and our property, have been frequently saved from revolutionary convulsion, and we have been conducted to our present state of civilisation, by the character and constitutional authority of a wise and conscientious sovereign.

CHAPTER XVI.

THE HOUSE OF LORDS.

The House of Lords sanctioned by the Voice of the Country.— Admission to it a high and distinguished Reward for Services to the State. — Its Importance as one of the Branches of the Legislature. — Influence of Personal Property. — Antiquity of the Separation of the People into Classes. — Advantages and Faults of Aristocratical Government.

The House of Lords is a body sanctioned by the voice of the country; and the few privileges it may have are of no moment, and are granted to enable that assembly to carry on the business of the nation as one of the constituted branches of the legislature. Admission to this body is a high and distinguished reward for merit or professional services rendered to the State, without expense to the country, and often gives distinction to wealth; in fact, its members have no privileges of any moment, except one * common to both branches of the legislature, which, from their property, would seldom or never be required. The House of Lords, at present, is very dissimilar to the assembly

* Freedom from arrest.

of barons of old; it is highly important at the present time, not only as one of the branches of the legislature, and as the highest judicial tribunal in the country, but as a court in which any hasty Acts, sometimes emanating from the other House, can be matured and digested. In so doing, the House of Lords has for many years shown its attention to the public voice. Even so far back as Mr. Fox's India Bill, it concurred with public opinion, and was ready to correct the acts of the other House, whenever those acts were not considered sufficiently matured, or when they were not sanctioned by the community.

In a review of the proceedings and votes of this part of the legislature, the greatest attention to the welfare of the community is discernible, particularly of late years. By the constant flow into the peerage of individuals on account of their property, merit, or public services, it does not remain an exclusive body, and creates no jealousy or hostile sentiment in any portion of the people. When we reflect on the immense mass of power and property belonging to the middle class of this country; when the diminution of the upper class is also considered, as will have appeared from the statement in an earlier part of these remarks, it is obvious that the House of Lords cannot be made too numerous in regard to persons of property, as being on all occasions a fence round the throne, although it is notorious at the present moment how strongly

the monarchical form of government, tempered by law, is sanctioned by public opinion, and confirmed by the happiness of a civilised community.

The late Mr. Pitt seemed to have been aware of the growing power of public opinion, and of the influence of personal property, when he stated that "admission into the House of Peers ought to be rendered easy to great capitalists (if not engaged in trade or commerce) as well as to great landowners." It appears that on more than one occasion he acted on this principle in the selections for the peerage during his administration. Under the reign of Geo. I., an attempt was made to bring in a bill to restrict the crown from creating peers; if this infringement on the royal prerogative had succeeded, its consequences would have been most pernicious, both to the sovereign, and towards that body it was intended to protect. To the crown it would have been an injury, by depriving it of one of its inherent privileges, that of being the fountain of honour, according to its will and pleasure. To the House of Lords, the result might have been equally injurious; this House gains its considerable strength and influence with the public from the men of talent and property that are poured into it, without which, its resolves might be less in accordance with the sentiments of the country than they have been for a considerable time, and are at present.

The separation of the people into classes accord-

ing to their property seems of very ancient date. Little credit is to be attached, as already observed in the chapter on Rome, to the account given by Livy of that ancient commonwealth; but, if correct, it appears that Numa Pompilius divided the population of that city into so many tribes, who voted according to their wealth. Even therefore in those early days it appears that property, such as it then was, obtained a superiority over numbers in legislative enactments.

Before the extension of civilisation, looking at the several nations in the world who have attained a great superiority over others, from the Romans to the inhabitants of the British isles, we find that most, if not all, the great achievements performed by such people, have been accomplished whilst they were governed, or at least were under the influence of an aristocratical form of government. The chief fault of an aristocratical government is, that in home legislation it is apt to consult the interest of its own order, not that of the people. In its relations with foreign nations, however, it has always acted wisely for the benefit of the home community. An aristocratical government is always steady in following its object. The mass of the lower class may be diverted from its true interest by its passions, or led away by ignorance. The judgment of a monarch may also be mistaken, or he may have little, or may not reign long; but an aristocratical assembly is too much alive to its own interests to

be deceived, too well informed to be led by the passions which may influence the lower classes. An aristocratical assembly resembles an able individual, resolute in his purpose, who never dies.

"I know not if there has ever existed any aristocracy so liberal as that of England, one which has, without interruption, supplied for the government of the country men so deserving and so enlightened.

"In the United States, where the public functionaries have no particular interest of any class to advocate, the continuous and steady march of the legislature and the government is for the public good, although the persons by whom the machine of the government is directed are often not qualified by ability, and sometimes even are contemptible." *

"In an hereditary monarchy, it is indispensable that an hereditary assembly, as one of the branches of the legislature, should exist. It is scarcely possible to imagine that in a nation where such an hereditary assembly was not in existence, and where all distinction by birth was rejected, that the highest

* "Je ne sais s'il a jamais existé une aristocratie aussi liberale que celle d'Angleterre, et qui ait sans interruption fourni au gouvernment du pays des hommes aussi dignes et aussi éclairés. Aux Etats Unis, où les fonctionnaires publics n'ont point d'intérêt de classe à faire prevaloir, la marche générale et continuée du gouvernement est bienfaisante, quoique les gouvernans soient souvent inhabiles, et quelquefois meprisables." — *Tocqueville on Democracy*, vol. ii. p. 113. edit. 1835.

dignity in the realm, that which most affects in its functions the repose and the interests of the nation, —the hereditary monarch—could be retained. If monarchy is any where found without an hereditary assembly of legislators, such a monarchy is pure despotism. The elements of that government which consists of a sovereign unassisted by an assembly of hereditary legislators, are a monarch who commands, an army which executes, and a people who obey. To give freedom to a nation governed by an hereditary monarch, an intermediate body must exist between the sovereign and a popular assembly.

Dans une monarchie héréditaire, l'hérédité d'une classe est indispensable. Il est impossible de concevoir comment, dans un pays où toute distinction de naissance serait rejettée, on consacrerait ce privilège pour la transmission la plus importante, pour celle de la fonction qui intéresse le plus essentiellement le repos et la vie des citoyens; pour que le gouvernement d'un seul subsiste sans classe héréditaire, il faut que ce soit un pur despotisme. Les éléments du gouvernement d'un seul, sans classe héréditaire, sont un homme qui commande, des soldats qui exécutent, un peuple qui obéit. Pour donner d'autres appuis à la monarchie, il faut un corps intermédiare." —*Principes de Politique,* par M. Benjamin Constant, vol. i. chap. iv.

CHAPTER XVII.

THE HOUSE OF COMMONS.

Powerless State of the Commons in former times.—Conduct of the Tudors and Stuarts towards the Commons' House.—Peter and Paul Wentworth. — Subserviency of the Commons. — Advance of the House in Power. — Early Desire for representative Government. — Influence of Property. — Curtailment of the Privileges of the House. — The Commons act in accordance with Public Opinion.

The King's "Poor Commons," as they styled themselves, were assembled for a long period, as already observed, not to participate with the barons and ecclesiastics in the functions of legislation, but submissively to represent their wants, and lay their grievances at the foot of the throne.

Even after some trifling increase in the middle class, when the Commons' House had, by the union of the county and borough members, become more numerous, considerable time elaped before any inclination was manifested, or rather influence possessed, to assume any power in legislation. In the fifteenth century they, the Commons, were considered as only entitled to petition the King and the Lords. They were told by their sovereign, Henry IV., that such was the only right they possessed. Whenever the Commons in those days

were desirous to form an opinion, it was customary to entreat that some lords or prelates might be sent to assist their consultations, as being incapable in themselves of judging aright in such matters. No measure could originate in the Commons in any other way than as a subject of petition from them to the King and the Lords, to whom alone it was held, that all decisions on public affairs appertained. The received *theory* of the constitutional position and rights of the lower house was nearly the same as at this day; but it was theory only, and could not be reduced to practice.

The power of this house, therefore, could only arise with the middle class. For many years after the representatives of the people held their meetings in St. Stephen's Chapel, which was about the middle of the fifteenth century, their situation was as different from their present state as that of a servant from that of his master. Did this arise from deficiency of talents, or of well-informed individuals amongst them? Certainly not. There may probably be as many able men in one century as in another; but information was not diffused through the community, because scarcely any middle class could be discovered.

It will be unnecessary to cite instances of the conduct of the sovereigns of the Tudor and Stuart race towards the Commons' House, or to enter into further details to prove that, under their government, very little power existed in that house,

and that those sovereigns were as despotic as any monarchs in Europe could possibly be. It is curious, however, to trace the growing spirit of independence in some individuals, and the general inclination of the House of Commons to give them all the support in their power, though in those days such support was feeble. Civilisation was not sufficiently extended, or public opinion sufficiently pronounced.

"Elizabeth, from the beginning to the end of her reign, kept her faithful Commons in as thorough order and subjection as ever pedagogue did a crew of well-whipped schoolboys. In 1571, however, a Mr. Strickland, having ventured to bring in a Bill for the reformation of the Book of Common Prayer, was immediately called before the Council, and commanded to forbear going to the House till her Majesty's pleasure should be further signified to him. In a subsequent Parliament, in 1575, her Majesty sent down a message to the House, commanding them to refrain from all further speeches or arguments touching the business of the Queen of Scots and the Duke of Norfolk, upon which there had for some time been considerable debate. On the first day of the next session, this interference was made the subject of a long harangue by Peter Wentworth, Esq., member for Tregony, some of whose expressions or doctrines so frightened the House, that, according to the Journal, they, 'out of a reverent regard of her Majesty's honour,

stopped his further proceeding before he had fully finished.' For this speech Wentworth was sequestered the House, and committed to the serjeant's ward as prisoner; and the matter being finally referred to the Star Chamber, the unlucky orator was committed close prisoner to the Tower."*

Wentworth and his brothers (Peter and Paul) seem to have been indomitable spirits, whom no persecution could thoroughly subdue. "In 1588, one of them, it is not stated which, was, for merely submitting some questions to the chair touching the right of the House to liberty of speech, sent a prisoner to his old quarters, the Tower, *by Her Majesty's order;* and four other members, who had spoken in favour of a bill lately brought in for an alteration of the liturgy, were the next day sent to the same place. The utmost length that the boldest of those left behind ventured on this occasion was, to move, 'That, since several good and necessary members of that House were taken from them, it would please them to be humble petitioners to her Majesty for the restoration of them again to the House.'"†

James I., from Newmarket, writes thus:—"Mr. Speaker, We have heard, by divers reports, to our great grief, that the far distance of our person at this time from our High Court of Parliament, caused by our want of health, hath emboldened some fiery and popular spirits in our House of Commons to

* Knight's "London." † Ibid.

debate and argue publicly on matters *far beyond their reach and capacity*, and so tending to our high dishonour, and to the trenching on our prerogative royal. But to put out of doubt any question of that nature that may arise hereafter, you shall resolve them, in our name, that we think ourself very free and able to punish any man's misdemeanours in Parliament, as well during the sitting, as after."

The above are a few among very numerous instances that might be cited, of the utter subserviency of the Commons in former times. From this degraded position, the House has gradually risen with the middle ranks, and, by slow degrees, claimed and obtained an equality with the other branches of the Legislature. As the class it represented increased, the representatives obtained the exclusive right of originating supplies of money; and, in proportion as wealth and the middle ranks advanced, secured, in other respects, that extent of power and influence which, as a body, they now enjoy. It has been seen that, at some particular periods of our history, the Commons were too submissive in their concessions; but it would have been impossible for them then to act otherwise. No resistance could effectually be made to despotic power. Any endeavour to coerce it would have been unavailing, and could only end in bringing destruction on those by whom it should be attempted.

But *now* the House of Commons realises the position which theory has long assigned to it. In his

chapter on Parliament, Blackstone says, "The Commons consist of all such men of any property in the kingdom, as have not seats in the House of Lords; every one of which has a voice in parliament, either personally, or by his representatives. In a free state, every man, who is supposed a free agent, ought to be, in some measure, his own governor; and therefore a branch, at least, of the legislative power should reside in the whole body of the people. And this power, when the territories of the State are small, and its citizens easily known, should be exercised by the people in their aggregate or collective capacity, as was wisely ordained in the petty republics of Greece, and the first rudiments of the Roman State. But this will be highly inconvenient, when the public territory is extended to any considerable degree, and the number of citizens is increased. Thus when, after the social war, all the burghers of Italy were admitted free citizens of Rome, and each had a vote in the public assemblies, it became impossible to distinguish the spurious from the real voter; and from that time all elections and popular deliberations grew tumultuous and disorderly; which paved the way for Marius and Sylla, Pompey and Cæsar, to trample on the liberties of their country, and at last to dissolve the commonwealth. In so large a state as ours, it is therefore very wisely contrived, that the people should do that by their representatives, which it is impracticable to perform in person:

representatives chosen by a number of minute and separate districts, wherein all the voters are, or easily may be, distinguished. And every member, though chosen by one particular district, when elected and returned, serves for the whole realm. For the end of his coming thither is not particular, but general; not barely to advantage his constituents, but the *common* wealth; to advise his Majesty (as appears from the writ of summons) *de communi consilio super negotiis quibusdem arduis et urgentibus, regem, statum et defensionem regni Angliæ et ecclesiæ Anglicanæ concernentibus.* And therefore he is not bound, like a deputy in the United Provinces, to consult with, or take the advice of his constituents upon any particular point, unless he himself thinks it proper or prudent to do so."

In almost every nation, at all periods, there appears to have existed an inclination to have a representative government; but unless a certain amount of civilisation has co-existed, the attempts may have been made in theory, but never could be put in practice. In the remotest times, even amongst barbarous tribes, this inclination to be represented is manifest. Tacitus, speaking of the Germans and Gauls, from whom the Britons appear to have been desirous of forming a model for their government, says the representatives of all in counsel assembled. An act or ordinance made in this counsel was

* "Nec regibus infinita potestas: de majoribus rebus principes consultant, de minoribus omnes."— *Tacitus de Morib. Germ.*

termed Gerædnissa, that is, a wise law, very analogous to the name Witena-Gemote. The use of the Witena-Gemote of the Saxons was always acceptable to the Britons, even in the state in which they were eight centuries from this time.

Far is it from our intention to enter into the wide field of the rise and establishment of representative governments, either in this island or elsewhere. Enough has been said on the subject, in tracing the influence of the House of Commons from its formation to the present day, to show that any representative assembly, unless supported by the voice of a civilised people, cannot make an effectual stand in favour of popular rights, or act in accordance with the interests of the community.

It cannot but be apparent that an assembly of representatives ought to be actuated by a desire to preserve property, and to repress any inclination to sudden outbreaks of popular clamour, to which in former times the inhabitants of most countries of Europe appear to have been liable, the indulgence of which seems to have much retarded the progress of civilisation, and the welfare of the human race.

Let us hope that in an improved and civilised state of society, the influence of public opinion may always preponderate. In gone-by days, however, in a republican form of government, a desire for war and conquest has often appeared manifest.

The reverse is likely to be the case in a nation where the assemblies that form constituent parts

of the legislature are possessed of property. A desire to preserve it will, in ordinary cases, create an inclination for peace. "Without some counterbalancing weight to regulate and restrain the expansive force of populous clamour," the social relations of society might be disturbed. This counteracting power is found in assemblies of men acting under the influence of property, and the desires with which its possession is attended.

The habits it induces, the foresight and self-control it awakens, the local attachments to which it gives rise, constitute the steadying power of human nature, and that great counterpoise to the moving and restless spirit which might otherwise be created by the passions of the multitude. Society appears in its most favourable form — the progress of improvement is most rapid, the steps of the human race are the greatest, when the energy of the expanding and moving is duly regulated by the steadying and controlling power. To restrain it altogether is often impossible, always pernicious; to give it free scope, is to expose society to utter ruin, and to defeat the very objects for which it was implanted in the human breast. Its due direction, and effectual regulation, is the great desideratum. At particular periods, and by a sort of unaccountable impulse, an extraordinary force is communicated to the moving power, and a restless desire for change becomes universal; old and important interests are overthrown; society

at home may be disordered. The human race, formerly, was violently propelled abroad, in the inroads of ruthless conquest, seldom in the channels of pacific colonisation, and in an incredibly short time a vast change in the destinies of mankind was effected.

In the Asiatic empires, as we shall see in the subsequent volume, where no counteracting power to despotism was found, this force of popular expansion was provided for by foreign conquest and the extermination of vanquished nations. At a later period in Europe, in these improved days, the source of quiet is found in the prevailing impulse for exertion, commerce, and peace. In general it will be found, that the great bulk of mankind follow that impulse which is communicated to them by minds of superior intelligence and moral principle, provided it be not against their individual interests, and this, it has appeared, is one of the main sources of public opinion. It also appears usually, that in those communities where civilisation has made some progress, public opinion is almost always pronounced in favour of popular constitutions and principles of free government; and in democratic states, the same sentiment is equally decided in support of the principles of order, and the control of property. • Freedom of opinion constituted the grand deliverance for which the religious reformers of the sixteenth century contended; and on all occasions contemplative minds are impressed with

the evils with which they are brought in contact; and, instead of yielding, strive to counteract them. The influence of public opinion, though at present in Great Britain most powerful, gains additional strength and security from the support of persons possessing property forming the competent members of the two Houses of Legislature.*

If the House of Commons, in former times, was "sinned against," it cannot be absolved from the charge of "sinning." "Through the long period during which it carried on a more or less determined struggle with the Crown and the other House for independence, if not co-ordinate authority — down to the era when, having successfully asserted its theoretical equality with each of those other branches of the legislature, it has come not only to be decidedly the controlling body in the state, but almost, we may say, to have absorbed the whole powers of government. It is worthy of remark, nevertheless, that, while the influence of the House of Commons as a power in the state has been constantly increasing throughout the last century and a half, what are called the privileges of the House and of its members have been rather undergoing curtailment during that space of time. Now that the House has been placed beyond the reach of attack from either the Lords or the Crown,

* For some parts of this and the preceding paragraph much is due to the able work of Mr. Alison on Europe, vol. x.

several of the rights which it formerly claimed and was allowed to exercise have been felt to be no longer necessary for the due performance of its functions; and wherever they have pressed inconveniently upon individuals or the public a disposition has been shown to cut them down—so that now, after having adjusted its position in relation to the other powers of the government, it would seem that the people's House had a controversy of the same kind with the people themselves—a controversy, we may add, in which it is as sure to be the party that shall have to yield as in the nature of things it was certain to be successful in its previous struggles. In so far, however, as this last contest has yet gone, the House has never given up an inch of ground without having made considerable resistance. It was not, for instance, till after a war of many years, and a most furious fight at the end, that the great right of reporting the debates in Parliament was gained by the public. It is little more than a century since nothing that was spoken in the House was suffered to be printed till after the Parliament in which it was spoken had been dissolved; or at least any earlier publication was denounced by the House as a daring act of illegality. On the 13th of April, 1738, the House resolved, 'That it is an high indignity to, and a notorious breach of the privilege of, this House, for any news-writer, in Letters or other papers (as Minutes, or under any other denomina-

tion), or for any printer or publisher of any printed newspaper of any denomination, to presume to insert in the said Letters or papers, or to give therein any account of, the debates or other proceedings of this House, or any Committee thereof, *as well during the recess as the sitting of parliament*, and that this House will proceed with the utmost severity against such offenders.' The monthly magazines, notwithstanding, still continued to report the debates, although for some time they took the precaution of indicating the speakers by fictitious appellations, to which they furnished their readers with a key when the House was no longer extant to call them to account. But it was not till the beginning of the year 1771 that the debates began to be given to the public day by day as they occurred; and then the attempt gave rise to a contest between the House and the newspapers, which occupied the House to the exclusion of all other business for three weeks, when a committee was appointed, whose report, when it was read two months after, recommending whether it might not be expedient to order that the offending parties should be taken into the custody of the sergeant-at-arms, Mr. Burke aptly compared to the decision of the assembly of mice, who came to a resolution that the cat, to prevent her doing any more mischief, should be tied up, but unfortunately forgot to say how the operation was to be managed. Another still longer contest maintained by the

House against the public regarded the privilege which was formerly asserted to belong to members, not only of freedom from personal arrest, but even from being subjected to actions at law in civil cases, nay, of being protected from having such actions brought even against their servants and tenants.*

About a century from the present time, it set up many absurd claims, which, however, have been abandoned as public opinion increased in power and influence. Let us give only one instance†, in the words as stated at the time‡:—In February this year, Mr. Alexander Murray having incurred the hot displeasure of the House, or of the faction that happened to be in the ascendant, by something he had done or was charged with having done at a recent Westminster election, it was voted that he should be sent close prisoner to Newgate; and further, that he should be brought to the bar to receive his sentence on his knees. He entered (says our narrator) with an air of confidence, composed of something between a martyr and a coxcomb. The Speaker called out "Your obeisance, Sir, your obeisance!" and then, "Sir, you must kneel." He replied, "Sir, I beg to be excused; I never kneel but to God." The Speaker repeated the command

* See an excellent History of the House of Commons, by Mr. G. L. Craik, in Knight's "London."

† 1751.

‡ Horace Walpole's Memoirs of the last Ten Years of the Reign of George II.

with great warmth. Murray answered, "Sir, I am sorry I cannot comply with your request; I would in any thing else. The Speaker cried, "Sir, I call upon you again to consider of it." Murray answered, "Sir, when I have committed a crime, I kneel to God for pardon; but I know my own innocence, and cannot kneel to any one else." The Speaker ordered the sergeant to take him away and secure him. He was going to reply: the Speaker would not allow him. The prisoner having been removed, a warm debate ensued, the Speaker telling them that if a party might behave thus with impunity, there was an end of the dignity and power of the House. One member proposed that the refractory delinquent should be kept in Newgate, without pen, ink, and paper; another hinted that it might be well to send him to the dungeon called "Little-ease," in the Tower; a third advised to have a special act of parliament passed for the special punishment of such audacious conduct. At length, after a committee had been named, the House adjourned at two o'clock in the morning. Murray lay in Newgate until the 25th June, when the parliament was prorogued. On the 20th November, a few days after parliament had re-assembled, it was again moved and carried, after a long debate, that Murray should still be brought to receive his sentence on his knees, Mr. Pelham, the prime minister, observing, that if the House had not all the authority it wished, it ought

at least to exert all it had. A few days after, when the sergeant-at-arms called to make his report, he informed the House the object of their resentment had absconded. A reward of 500*l.* was then offered for his apprehension, but he was never taken. From this time, the exaction of the ceremony of kneeling before the House was attended with considerable awkwardness, and at length, the 18th March, 1772, a standing order (a very appropriate term in this case) was made, that when any person was brought to the bar as a delinquent, he should receive the judgment of the House standing. "The alteration made by this order," says Hatsell, with due solemnity, "was suggested by the *humanity* of the House." The good man had overlooked the fact that the House found it not advisable to maintain an offensive privilege in opposition to the feeling of the community.

Still the question of privilege is not set at rest. The courts of law and the House of Commons have been opposed to each other; the former fulfilling their duty in protecting the liberty of the subject, the latter in preserving its privileges, such as they imagined them to be transmitted by the law and usage of Parliament.

It is far from our intention to take any part in this question: the course adopted in the preceding pages, of avoiding all party discussions on any political subject, will be followed in the present instance. Public opinion must at length settle the dispute.

As both parties at issue are strongly supported and esteemed by those capable of giving tone to public sentiment, any appearance of a difference between the courts of law and the House of Commons, cannot but be deprecated by the nation.

On perusing the history of the proceedings of the House of Commons, from the period when it rose into importance as the organ of public opinion to the present time, it appears that it has endeavoured to keep up certain privileges which were not always necessary for the good of the nation, nor essential to the dignity of the house; such, for example, as the absurd demand that persons called to the bar should receive reproof on their knees.

Most persons must have heard of the business in reference to Mr. Wilkes, and of the other squabbles in which the House has been engaged in vindication of its rights and of the law of Parliament. Without entering into any detail of the late proceedings in that respect, or the discussions which have taken place, both in Parliament and in the courts of law, let us quote a few words which have recently fallen from leading statesmen.

It was said by a person of very high authority in the House, that the question was, whether, the House having pleaded to the action for damages, ought to prevent the execution of the judgment; and he concurred in opinion, that as the House had submitted to the arbitration of the Court of

Queen's Bench, there would be some inconsistency and some injustice, when the Court decided against them, in opposing the execution of the judgment." *

On the other side it was argued, that if once the decision of the courts of law superseded the privileges of the House of Commons, they would in time sink into nothing, and much injury might arise in consequence, both to the Parliament and to the people. It was observed by a member of the other House, that the House of Commons had a right to deal as they pleased with their own standing orders. †

It can scarcely be doubted, judging from the gradual abandonment of whatever has militated against the public rights, that all claims of privilege made by the Commons, not essential for the interests of the country, or requisite to keep up a certain authority in the House, will not be sanctioned by public opinion, and must therefore ultimately be abandoned.

There is no doubt that the House of Commons, as at present constituted, represents in a great measure the public sentiment of the country. It is evident that it does so more effectually by the mode of election now in use, than if the members were chosen by universal suffrage. At present the House

* Sir R. Peel, Jan. 16. 1841.

† Lord Brougham, Debate, July 28. 1842.

of Commons represents really what it ought to represent, that is, the interests of the mass of the community. Were universal suffrage allowed, the lower class, from its numbers, would predominate over the others; and in such a case the Commons' House, instead of being the leading organ of the community, and the mouth-piece of public opinion, would incur the risk of pouring out the dictates of popular clamour.

The chief influence that can be exercised by an assembly of representatives chosen by the people, must arise from their deliberations and decisions being guided by public opinion. Without the support of a middle class, an assembly of persons elected by the people is a mere farce. We have seen the conduct of the House of Commons in the reign of Queen Elizabeth, and of James I. Until supported by the public voice, under the unfortunate Charles, they could neither prevent nor control any illegal or tyrannical proceeding on the part of the monarch, because there was not sufficient influence in public opinion to maintain such an opposition. Their influence before those political disputes which occasioned the civil war was so trifling, that their resolves were in fact those of the sovereign; and it could not be otherwise. Before public opinion became of importance, the House of Commons was of none; they rose together progressively and simultaneously, as will always be the case as the requisites for civilisation are extended.

The Houses of Peers and of Commons are decidedly actuated by, and act in accordance with, public opinion at the present time. Whenever a projected change in legislation is mooted in either House, the intention is spread through the country with extraordinary celerity. Public opinion is manifested; and, in most cases, by its decision is the measure passed or rejected by the two branches of the Legislature. If the public were kept in ignorance of the discussions; if the community looked on an ugly mis-shapen building in Westminster, only as a manufactory for laws and taxes, without being made acquainted with the reasons for which they were enacted, or with the necessity for their being imposed, it cannot for a moment be imagined that so implicit an obedience as is now yielded by the people would be paid, or that the acts and deliberations of either House would be so much supported by public opinion as they now unquestionably are. When every argument, every remark, every opposition to any measure is made known by the publication of the debates — the wisdom, the necessity, or the policy, and even the expediency of the measures adopted, are canvassed and considered, argued and refuted, at the bar of the public. The opinions of the country and of Parliament are pronounced simultaneously, and the decision of the Legislature is that of public opinion. It is this union of sentiment between the people and the Legislature that has enabled the

latter to carry on, and the former to support, protracted and most expensive wars, which few free states would have borne unless under the influence of the same impulse, and the union of the same motives, — national welfare and security.

CHAPTER XVIII.

INFLUENCE OF CIVILISATION ON THE LOWER CLASS.

Civilisation not without Disadvantages.—Effects of Machinery.—Increase of Population beyond Subsistence. — Fallacy of Condorcet's Theory. — Soundness of that of Mr. Malthus. — Observation of Dr. Paley. —Emigration no Remedy for redundant Population. — Difficulties and Dangers of Colonisation. — Instances of these. — Causes of Failures. — Division of Landed Property, and Diffusion of Mercantile Capital. — Benefit, to the Lower Classes, of Education.

WHEREVER any considerable amelioration is made in organised society, or mankind in general, it may happen that some concomitant disadvantages may take place, not enough to counterbalance the advantages gained, but sufficient to deserve attention, as occasioning loss either to a greater or a less extent.

Already has it been remarked, that the general use of machinery enlarges the middle classes, increases wealth in a people, causes division of extensive landed property, augments internal and external commerce, and creates an additional demand for manufactures. But these advantages, carried to an indefinite extent, may bring in their train a result to be regretted. We have endea-

voured to show that an improved state of society, and the use of mechanical power, had a tendency on the whole to promote the happiness of man, by lifting a number of individuals from the lower into the middle class. How far this operation may continue—how far the same cause may produce the same effect—is a question difficult to answer; but no doubt can exist that such has been the result to the present time.

At every period which may arise during the progress of cultivation, from the present moment to the time when the whole earth may resemble a garden, the distress for want of food would be constantly pressing on all mankind, if they were equal. Though the produce of the earth would be increasing every year, population would be tending to increase much faster, and the redundancy must necessarily be checked by the periodical or constant action of moral restraint, vice, or misery.

A French writer*, in his "*Esquisse d'un tableau historique des progrès de l'esprit humain*," written, it is said, under the pressure of that proscription which terminated in his death, laments that he had no hope of seeing, during his life, the lower class advanced to that state of perfectibility which he had once fondly anticipated. This is a singular instance of the attachment of a man to principles, which every day's experience was, so fatally for

* M. Condorcet.

himself, contradicting. To see the human mind, in one of the most enlightened nations of the world, debased by such a fermentation of fear, cruelty, malice, revenge, ambition, madness, and folly, as would have disgraced the most savage nations in the most barbarous age, must have been such a tremendous shock to his ideas of the necessary and inevitable progress of the human mind, as nothing but the blindest adherence to a theory, in spite of all appearances, could have withstood.

This posthumous publication of M. Condorcet is only a sketch of a much larger work, which he proposed should be executed. It necessarily wants therefore that detail and application, which can alone prove the truth of any hypothesis. A few observations will be sufficient to show how completely this theory is contradicted, when applied to a real and not an imaginary state of things.*

In the last division of Condorcet's work, which treats of the future progress of man towards perfection, he says, "that comparing in the different civilised nations of Europe the actual population with the extent of territory, and observing their cultivation, their industry, their divisions of labour, and their means of subsistence, we shall see, that it would be impossible to preserve the same means of sub-

* In the ensuing observations the present writer, under a conviction of their truth, has adopted the arguments and statements of the Rev. Mr. Malthus.

sistence, and consequently the same population, without a number of individuals who have no other means of supplying their wants than their industry."

Having allowed the necessity of such a class of men, and adverting afterwards to the precarious revenue of those families, that would depend so entirely on the life and health of their chief, he says very justly, "There exists then a necessary cause of inequality, of dependence, and even of misery, which menaces without ceasing the most numerous and active class of our societies." The difficulty is just, and well stated; but his mode of removing it will, in our apprehension, be found totally inefficacious.

By the application of calculations to the probabilities of life, and the interest of money, he (Condorcet) proposed that a fund should be established, which should assure to the old an assistance produced in part by their own former savings, and in part by the savings of individuals, who, in making the same sacrifice, die before they reap the benefit of it. The same or a similar fund should give assistance to women and children who lose their husbands or fathers; and afford a capital to those who were of an age to found a new family, sufficient for the development of their industry. These establishments, he observes, might be made in the name and under the protection of the society. Going still further, he says, that by the just appli-

cation of calculations, means might be found of more completely preserving a state of equality, by preventing credit from being the exclusive privilege of great fortunes, and yet giving it a basis equally solid, and by rendering the progress of industry and the activity of commerce less dependent on great capitalists.

Such establishments and calculations may appear very promising upon paper; but when applied to real life, they will be found to be absolutely nugatory. M. Condorcet allows, that a class of people which maintains itself entirely by industry is necessary to every state. Why does he allow this? No other reason can well be assigned, than because he conceives, that the labour necessary to procure subsistence for an extended population will not be performed without the goad of necessity. If, by establishments upon the plans that have been mentioned, this spur to industry be removed; if the idle and negligent be placed upon the same footing with regard to their credit and the future support of their wives and families, as the active and industrious; can we expect to see men exert that activity in bettering their condition, which now forms the master-spring of public prosperity?

But independently of this great objection to these establishments, and supposing for a moment that they would give no check to production, the greatest difficulty is yet behind.

Were every man sure of a comfortable provision

for a family, almost every man would have one; and were the rising generation free from the "killing frost" of misery, population must increase with unusual rapidity. Of this the French writer seems to be fully aware himself; and after having described further improvements, he says,

"But in this progress of industry and happiness, each generation will be called to more extended enjoyments; and in consequence, by the physical constitution of the human frame, to an increase in the number of individuals. Will it not mark the limit, when all further melioration will become impossible, and point out that term to the perfectibility of the human race, which it may reach in the course of ages, but can never pass?" He then adds,—

"There is no person who does not see how very distant such a period is from us. But shall we ever arrive at it? It is equally impossible to pronounce for, or against, the future realisation of an event, which cannot take place but at an æra, when the human race will have attained improvements, of which we can at present scarcely form a conception."

How far the middle class may extend, so as to diminish the lower, it is impossible to ascertain. A great point would be gained by the education of the lower class, by instilling a moral principle in their minds, and convincing them of the advantage of not settling in life as married people, without in

the first instance making some provision for themselves and whatever family they may have.

In this respect, says Malthus, there is an essential difference between that improved state of society which we have supposed, and most of the other speculations on this subject. The improvement there supposed, if we ever should make approaches towards it, is to be effected in the way in which we have been in the habit of seeing all the greatest improvements effected,—by a direct application to the interest and happiness of each individual. It is not required of us to act from motives to which we are unaccustomed; to pursue a general good, which we may not distinctly comprehend, or the effect of which may be weakened by distance and diffusion. The happiness of the whole is to be the result of the happiness of individuals, and to begin first with them. No co-operation is required. Every step tells. He who performs his duty faithfully will reap the full fruits of it, whatever may be the number of others who fail. This duty is intelligible to the humblest capacity. It is merely, that he is not to bring beings into the world, for whom he cannot find the means of support.

The very able writer of the above adds, when once this subject is cleared from the obscurity thrown over it by parochial laws and private benevolence, every man must feel the strongest conviction of such an obligation. If he cannot support his children, they must starve; and if

he marry in the face of a fair probability that he shall not be able to support his children, he is guilty of all the evils which he thus brings upon himself, his wife, and his offspring. It is clearly his interest, and will tend greatly to promote his happiness, to defer marrying, till by industry and economy he is in a capacity to support the children that he may reasonably expect from his marriage; and as he cannot in the mean time gratify his passions, without violating the express command of God, and running a great risk of injuring himself, or some of his fellow creatures, considerations of his own interest and happiness will dictate to him the strong obligation to a moral conduct, while he remains unmarried.

However powerful, continues he, may be the impulses of passion, they are generally in some degree modified by reason. And it does not seem entirely visionary to suppose, that, if the true and permanent cause of poverty were clearly explained, and forcibly brought home to each man's bosom, it would have some, and perhaps not an inconsiderable influence on his conduct; at least the experiment has never yet been fairly tried. Almost every thing that has been hitherto done for the poor, has tended, as if with solicitous care, to throw a veil of obscurity over this subject, and to hide from them the true cause of their poverty. When the wages of labour are hardly sufficient to maintain two children, a man

marries, and has five or six. He of course finds himself miserably distressed. He accuses the insufficiency of the price of labour to maintain a family. He accuses his parish for their tardy and sparing fulfilment of their obligation to assist him. He accuses the avarice of the rich, who suffer him to want what they can so well spare. He accuses the partial and unjust institutions of society, which have awarded him an inadequate share of the produce of the earth. He accuses perhaps the dispensations of Providence, which have assigned to him a place in society so beset with unavoidable distress and dependence. In searching for objects of accusation, he never adverts to the quarter from which his misfortunes originate. The last person that he would think of accusing is himself, on whom in fact the principal blame lies. He may perhaps wish that he had not married, because he now feels the inconvenience of it; but it never enters into his head that he can have done any thing wrong. He has always been told, that to raise up subjects for his country is a very meritorious act. He has done this act, and yet is suffering for it. He naturally thinks that he is suffering for righteousness' sake; and it cannot but strike him as most extremely unjust and cruel in his country to allow him thus to suffer, in return for giving them what they are continually declaring that they particularly want.

Till these erroneous ideas have been coreected, and the language of nature and reason has been generally heard on the subject of population, instead of the language of error and prejudice, it cannot be said that any fair experiment has been made with the understandings of the common people; and we cannot justly accuse them of improvidence and want of industry, till they act as they do now after it has been brought home to their comprehensions that they are themselves the cause of their own poverty; that the means of redress are in their own hands, and in the hands of no other persons whatever; that the society in which they live, and the government which presides over it, are without any direct power in this respect; and, however ardently they may desire to relieve them, and whatever attempts they may make to do so, are really and truly unable to execute what they benevolently wish, but unjustly promise; that when the wages of labour will not maintain a family, it is an incontrovertible sign that their country do not want more subjects, or at least that they cannot support them; that if they marry in this case, so far from fulfilling a duty to society, they are throwing a useless burden on it, at the same time that they are plunging themselves into distress; and that they are acting directly contrary to the will of God, and bringing down upon themselves various diseases, which might all, or the greater part, have been avoided, if they had

attended to the repeated admonitions which He gives by the general laws of nature to every being capable of reason.*

Dr. Paley, in his Moral Philosophy, observes, that "In countries in which subsistence is become scarce, it behoves the State to watch over the public morals with increased solicitude; for nothing but the instinct of nature, under the restraint of chastity, will induce men to undertake the labour, or consent to the sacrifice of personal liberty and indulgence, which the support of a family in such circumstances requires."† That it is always the duty of a State, replies Mr. Malthus, to use every exertion likely to be effectual in discouraging vice and promoting virtue, and that no temporary circumstances ought to cause any relaxation in these exertions, is certainly true. The means therefore proposed are always good; but the particular end in view in this case appears to be absolutely criminal. We wish to force people into marriage, when from the acknowledged scarcity of subsistence they will have little chance of being able to support their children. We might as well force people into the water who are unable to swim. In both cases we rashly tempt Providence; nor have we more reason to believe that a miracle will be worked to save us from the misery and mortality resulting from our conduct in the one case than in the other.

* This quotation from Mr. Malthus is given here, as being important in its results.

† Vol. ii. c. xi. p. 352.

The object of those who really wish to better the condition of the lower classes of society must be, to raise the relative proportion between the price of labour and the price of provisions, so as to enable the labourer to command a due share of the necessaries and comforts of life. Hitherto this end has been attempted by encouraging the married poor, and consequently increasing the number of labourers, and overstocking the market with a commodity which we still say that we wish to be dear. It would seem to have required no great spirit of divination to foretell the certain failure of such a plan of proceeding. There is nothing however like experience. It has been tried in many different countries, and for many hundred years, and the success has always been answerable to the nature of the scheme. It is really time now to try something else.

Of late years emigration has been one of the fashionable topics of declamation, and much has been said of the advantages arising from a system formed under the sanction of the legislature for that purpose. Whatever may be the benefits arising from emigration, in lessening the number of the indigent in the community, it is evident, that unless education and moral principle are inculcated in the minds of the lower classes, the mere act of taking so many individuals out of their ranks every year, and sending them to various colonies, may certainly be of service at the moment,

but will not permanently check the evils of pauperism in the mother country. Population, like the hair when cut on the human head, will only shoot out with greater vigour.

However, as so much has been said on the subject, let us consider how far a system of emigration or colonisation ought to be adopted in a civilised community. Certainly it may be said, that in case of a redundant population in the more cultivated parts of the world, the natural and obvious remedy that presents itself is, emigration to those parts that are uncultivated. As these parts are of great extent, and very thinly peopled, this resource might appear, on a first view of the subject, to be an adequate remedy, or at least to be capable of removing the evil to a distant period: but when we advert to experience, and to the actual state of the uncivilised parts of the globe, instead of any thing like an adequate remedy, it will appear but a slight palliative.

In the accounts which we have of the peopling of new countries, the difficulties, privations, and dangers, with which the first settlers have had to struggle, appear to be even greater than we can well imagine they could be exposed to in their parent state. The mere endeavour to avoid that degree of unhappiness arising from the difficulty of supporting a family, might long have left the new world of America unpeopled by Europeans, if those more powerful passions—the thirst of gain,

the spirit of adventure, and religious enthusiasm, had not directed and animated the enterprise. These passions enabled the first adventurers to triumph over every obstacle; but in many instances in a way to make humanity shudder, and to defeat the true end of emigration. Whatever may be the character of the Spanish inhabitants of Mexico and Peru at the present moment, we cannot read the accounts of the first conquests of these countries without feeling strongly, that the race destroyed was in moral worth as well as numbers equal if not superior to the race of their destroyers.

The parts of America settled by the English, from being thinly peopled, were better adapted to the establishment of new colonies; yet even here, the most formidable difficulties presented themselves. In the settlement of Virginia, begun by Sir Walter Raleigh, three attempts completely failed. Nearly half the first colony was destroyed by the savages; and the rest, consumed and worn down by fatigue and famine, deserted the country, and returned home in despair. The second colony was cut off to a man in a manner unknown; but they were supposed to be destroyed by the Indians. The third experienced the same dismal fate; and the remains of the fourth, after it had been reduced by famine and disease in the course of six months from five hundred to sixty persons, were returning in a famishing and desperate condition to England, when they were met in the

mouth of the Chesapeake Bay by a squadron loaded with provisions, and every thing for their relief and defence. *

The first puritan settlers in New England were few in number. They landed in a bad season, and were only supported by their private funds. The winter was premature and terribly cold; the country was covered with wood, and afforded very little for the refreshment of persons sickly with such a voyage, or for the sustenance of an infant people. Nearly half of them perished by the scurvy, by want, and the severity of the climate; yet those who survived were not dispirited by their hardships, but, supported by their energy of character, and the satisfaction of finding themselves out of the reach of the spiritual arm, reduced this savage country by degrees to yield a comfortable subsistence. †

Even the plantation of Barbadoes, which increased afterwards with such extraordinary rapidity, had at first to contend with a country utterly desolate, an extreme want of provisions, a difficulty in clearing the ground unusually great from the uncommon size and hardness of the trees, a most disheartening scantiness and poverty in their first crops, and a slow and precarious supply of provisions from England. ‡

* Burke's America, vol. ii. p. 219. Robertson, b. ix. p. 83. 86.

† Burke's America, vol. ii. p. 144. ‡ Id. p. 85.

The attempt of the French, in 1663, to form at once a powerful colony in Guiana, was attended with the most disastrous consequences. Twelve thousand men were landed in the rainy season, and placed under tents and miserable sheds. In this situation, inactive, weary of existence, and in want of all necessaries; exposed to contagious distempers, which are always occasioned by bad provisions, and to all the irregularities which idleness produces among the lower classes of society; almost the whole of them ended their lives in all the horrors of despair. The attempt was completely abortive. Two thousand men, whose robust constitutions had enabled them to resist the inclemency of the climate, and the miseries to which they had been exposed, were brought back to France, and the 26,000,000 of livres, which had been expended in the expedition, were totally lost.

In the late settlements at Port Jackson in New Holland, a melancholy and affecting picture is drawn by Collins of the extreme hardships, with which, for some years, the infant colony had to struggle, before the produce was equal to its support. These distresses were undoubtedly aggravated by the character of the settlers; but those which were caused by the unhealthiness of a newly cleared land, the failure of first crops, and the

Raynal; Hist. des Indes, tom. vii. liv. xiii. p. 43. 10 vols. 8vo. 1795.

uncertainty of supplies from so distant a mother country, were of themselves sufficiently disheartening to place in a strong point of view the necessity of great resources, as well as unconquerable perseverance, in the colonisation of savage lands.

The establishment of colonies in the more thinly-peopled regions of Europe and Asia would evidently require still greater resources. From the power and warlike character of the inhabitants of these countries, a considerable military force would be necessary, to prevent the utter and immediate destruction of settlers. Even the frontier provinces of the most powerful states are defended with considerable difficulty from such restless neighbours; and the peaceful labours of the cultivator are continually interrupted by their predatory incursions. The late Empress Catharine of Russia found it necessary to protect by regular fortresses the colonies, which she had established in the districts near the Wolga; and the calamities which her subjects suffered by the incursions of the Crim Tartars furnished a pretext, and perhaps a just one, for taking possession of the whole of the Crimea, expelling the greatest part of these turbulent neighbours, and reducing the rest to a more tranquil mode of life. *

The difficulties attending a first establishment, from soil, climate, and the want of proper conveniences, are of course nearly the same in these

* Malthus on Population, vol. ii. p. 60.

regions as in America. Mr. Eton, in his account of the Turkish Empire, says, that 75,000 Christians were obliged by Russia to emigrate from the Crimea, and sent to inhabit the country abandoned by the Nogai Tartars; but the winter coming on before the houses built for them were ready, a great part had no other shelter from the cold than what was afforded them by holes dug in the ground, covered with what they could procure, and the greatest part of them perished. Only seven thousand remained a few years afterwards. Another colony from Italy to the banks of the Borysthenes had, he says, no better fate, owing to the bad management of those who were commissioned to provide for them.

It is needless to add to these instances, as the accounts given of the difficulties experienced in new settlements are all nearly similar. It has been justly observed by a correspondent of Dr. Franklin, that one of the reasons why we have seen so many fruitless attempts to settle colonies at an immense public and private expense by several of the powers of Europe is, that the moral and mechanical habits adapted to the mother country are frequently not so to the newly-settled one, and to external events, many of which are unforeseen; and that it is to be remarked, that none of the English colonies became any way considerable, till the necessary manners were born and grew up in the country. Pallas particularly notices the want of proper habits in

the colonies established by Russia, as one of the causes why they did not increase so fast as might have been expected.*

In addition to this it may be observed, that the first establishment of a new colony generally presents an instance of a country peopled considerably beyond its actual produce; and the natural consequence seems to be, that this population, if not amply supplied by the mother country, should at the commencement be diminished to the level of the first scanty productions, and not begin permanently to increase, till the remaining numbers had so far cultivated the soil, as to make it yield a quantity of food more than sufficient for their own support; and which consequently they could divide with a family. The frequent failures in the establishment of new colonies tend strongly to show the order of precedence between food and population.

In the debate, April 6th, 1843, on colonization, very ably commenced, the speeches of two members, one of the present, the other of the late government, held out no great expectation of permanent benefit from legislative enactment, or from the intervention of the government. One said, "he was unable to see any thing practically useful." † The other remarked, that "he should not feel himself justified in supporting such a system of colonization,

* Malthus on Population.
† Lord Stanley.

unless he saw more clearly than at present, that the great benefits promised could be realised." *

It must be acknowledged, then, that the class of people, on whom the distress arising from a too rapidly increasing population would principally fall, could not possibly begin a new colony in a distant country. From the nature of their situation, they must necessarily be deficient in those resources, which alone could ensure success: and unless they could find leaders among the higher classes, urged by the spirit of avarice or enterprise, or of religious or political discontent; or were furnished with means and support by government; they would be absolutely unable to take possession of any of those uncultivated regions, of which there is such an extent on the earth.

When new colonies have been once securely established, the difficulty of emigration is indeed very considerably diminished; yet, even then, some resources are necessary to provide vessels for the voyage, and support and assistance till the emigrants can settle themselves, and find employment in their adopted country. How far it is incumbent upon a government to furnish these resources may be a question; but whatever be its duty in this particular, perhaps it is too much to require, that, except where any particular colonial advantages are proposed, emigration should be actively assisted.

Lord John Russell.

The necessary resources for transport and maintenance are however frequently furnished by individuals or private companies. For many years before the American war, and for some few since, the facilities of emigration to this new world, and the probable advantages in view, were unusually great; and it must be considered undoubtedly as a very happy circumstance for any country, to have so comfortable an asylum for its redundant population. But I would ask, says Mr. Malthus, whether, even during these periods, the distress among the common people in this country was little or nothing; and whether every man felt secure, before he ventured on marriage, that however large his family might be, he should find no difficulty in supporting it without parish assistance. The answer, I fear, could not be in the affirmative.

It will be said, that when an opportunity of advantageous emigration is offered, it is the fault of the people themselves, if instead of accepting it they prefer a life of extreme poverty in their own country. Is it then a fault for a man to feel an attachment to his native soil, to love the parents that nurtured him, his kindred, his friends, and the companions of his early years? Or is it no evil that he suffers, because he consents to bear it rather than snap these cords which nature has wound in close and intricate folds round the human heart? The great plan of Providence seems to require, indeed, that these ties should sometimes be broken;

but the separation does not, on that account, give less pain; and though the general good may be promoted by it, it does not cease to be an individual evil. Besides, doubts and uncertainty must ever attend all distant emigrations, particularly in the apprehensions of the lower classes of people: They cannot feel quite secure that the representations made to them of the high price of labour, or the cheapness of land, are accurately true. They are placing themselves in the power of the persons who are to furnish them with the means of transport and maintenance, who may, perhaps, have an interest in deceiving them; and the sea which they are to pass appears to them like the separation of death from all their former connexions, and in a manner to preclude the possibility of return in case of failure, as they cannot expect the offer of the same means to bring them back to their native land.

In the first settlement and colonisation of new countries, an easy division and subdivision of the land is a point of the very highest importance. Without a facility of obtaining land in small portions by those who have accumulated small capitals, and of settling new proprietors upon the soil, as new families branch off from the parent stocks, no adequate effect can be given to the principle of population. This facility of settling the rising population upon the soil is still more imperiously necessary in inland countries, which are not favour-

ably situated for external and internal commerce. Countries of this description, if, from the laws and customs relating to landed property, great difficulties are thrown in the way of its distribution, may remain for ages very scantily peopled, in spite of the principle of population; while the easy division and subdivision of the land, as new families arise to be provided for, might, with comparatively little commerce, furnish an effective demand for population, and create a produce which would have no inconsiderable value in exchange. Such a country would probably have a small neat produce compared with its gross produce; it would also be greatly deficient in the amount of its manufactures and mercantile products; yet still its actual produce and population might be respectable; and for the increase of exchangeable value which had produced these effects, it would be mainly indebted to that distribution of the produce which had arisen from the easy division of land.

The very word "colony" signified originally no more than a *farm;* that is, the habitation of a peasant, *colonus*, with the quantity of land sufficient for the support of his family: "*quantum colonus unus arare poterat.*"

The rapid increase of the United States of America, taken as a whole, has undoubtedly been aided very greatly by foreign commerce, and particularly by the power of selling raw produce, obtained with little labour, for European commodities which have

cost much labour. But the cultivation of a great part of the interior territory has depended in a considerable degree upon the cause above stated; and the facility with which even common workmen, if they were industrious and economical for some years, could become new settlers and small proprietors of land, has given prodigious effect to that high money price of labour, which could not have taken place without foreign commerce; and together they occasioned yearly that extraordinary increase of exchangeable value, which so distinguished the progress of the establishments in North America, compared with any others with which we are acquainted.

Over almost all Europe a most unequal and vicious division of landed property was established during the feudal times. In some states the laws, which protected and perpetuated this division, have been greatly weakened, and by the aids of commerce and manufactures have been rendered comparatively inefficient. But in others these laws still remain in great force, and throw very great obstacles in the way of increasing wealth and population. A very large proprietor, surrounded by very poor peasants, presents a distribution of property most unfavourable to effective demand.

Adam Smith has well described the slack kind of cultivation which was likely to take place, and did in fact take place, among the great proprietors of the middle ages. But not only were they bad

cultivators and improvers; and for a time perhaps deficient in a proper taste for manufactured products; yet, even if they had possessed these tastes in the degree found to prevail at present, their inconsiderable numbers would have prevented their demand from producing any important mass of such wealth. * We hear of great splendour among princes and nobles in every period of history. The difficulty was not so much to inspire the rich with a love of finery, as to break down their immense properties, and to create a greater number of demanders who were able and willing to purchase the results of productive labour. This, it is obvious, could only be effected very gradually. That the increasing love of finery might have assisted considerably in accomplishing this object is highly probable; but these tastes alone, unaccompanied by a better distribution of property, would have been quite inefficient. "The possessor of numerous estates, after he had furnished his mansion or castle splendidly, and provided himself with handsome clothes and handsome carriages, would not change them all every two months, merely because he had the power of doing it. Instead of indulging in such useless and troublesome changes, he would be more likely to keep a number of servants and idle dependents, to take lower rents with a view of having a greater com-

*Malthus on Population.

mand over his tenants, and perhaps to sacrifice the produce of a considerable portion of his land in order to encourage more game, and to indulge, with more effect and less interruption, in the pleasures of the chase. Thirty or forty proprietors, with incomes answering to between one thousand and five thousand a year, would create a much more effective demand for wheaten bread, good meat, and manufactured products, than a single proprietor possessing a hundred thousand a year."*

It is physically possible, indeed, for a nation, with a comparatively small body of very rich proprietors, and a large body of very poor workmen, to push both the produce of the land and manufactures to the greatest extent that the resources and ingenuity of the country would admit. Perhaps, under such a division of property the powers of production might be rendered the greatest possible; but, in order to call them forth, we must suppose a passion among the rich for the consumption of manufactures, and the results of productive labour, much more excessive than has ever been witnessed in human society. The consequence is, that no instance has ever been known of a country which has pushed its natural resources to a great extent, with a small proportionate body of persons of property, however rich and luxurious they might be. Practically it has always been found, that the ex-

cessive wealth of the few is in no respect equivalent, with regard to effective demand, to the more moderate wealth of the many. A large body of manufacturers and merchants can only find a market for their commodities among a numerous class of consumers above the rank of mere workmen and labourers; and experience shows us that manufacturing wealth is at once the consequence of a better distribution of property, and the cause of further improvements in such distribution, by an increase in the proportion of the middle classes of society, which the growth of manufacturing and mercantile capital cannot fail to create.

But though it be true that the division of landed property, and the diffusion of manufacturing and mercantile capital, to a certain extent, are of the utmost importance to the increase of wealth; yet it is equally true that, beyond a certain extent, they would impede the progress of wealth as much as they had before accelerated it. There is a certain elevation at which the projectile will go the farthest; but if it be directed either higher or lower, it will fall short. With a comparatively small proportion of rich proprietors, who would prefer menial service and territorial influence to an excessive quantity of manufactured and mercantile products, the power of supplying the results of productive labour would be much greater than the will to consume them, and the progress of wealth would be checked by the want of effective demand.

With an excessive proportion of small proprietors both of land and capital, all great improvements on the land, all great enterprises in commerce and manufactures, and all the wonders described by Adam Smith, as resulting from the division of labour, would be at an end; and the progress of wealth would be checked by a failure in the powers of supply.

From what has been quoted in the present chapter from a high authority, it appears that, in a civilised and wealthy community, emigration or colonisation can be encouraged to a great extent; but that such a lopping off from redundant numbers can only *alleviate for a time* the pressure of an over-populated country. The only permanent method of preventing an excessive pauper-population must be the inculcation of knowledge and moral principle. Knowledge would, in most cases, be followed by prudence; and prudence would enforce on young men who have only their manual exertions to depend on, the necessity of putting by their earnings, and not settling in life till they should, in the savings-banks or elsewhere, have accumulated a sum adequate to the purpose of providing for future increased wants, and the support of a family. This accumulation could not reasonably be expected before they had reached thirty years at least.

Until the lower classes are educated; until this principle is implanted in their minds, and they are satisfied of its truth, and of its influence on their

happiness, all the colonisation or emigration that any government can afford, will not remedy the evil of excessive pauperism. The utmost wealth of this empire, were it ten times more ample than it is, would be insufficient to prevent the spread of human misery arising from over-population.

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